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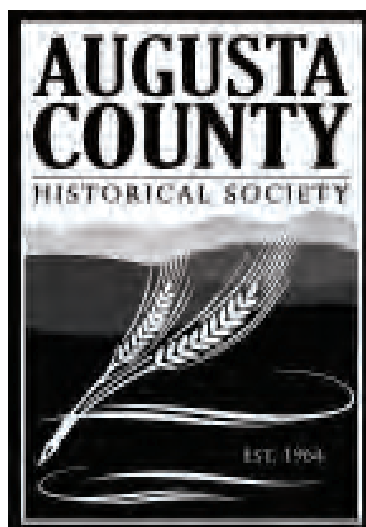
Augusta Historical Bulletin

Published by the

AUGUSTA COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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Augusta County Historical Society

A purpose of the Augusta County Historical Society is to publish the *Augusta Historical Bulletin*, which is to be sent without charge to all members.

The membership of the society is composed of persons who pay the following dues as of June 1, 2020:

Annual (individual).....	\$45
Annual (family).....	\$65
Annual Student (high school/college).....	\$20
Annual Institutional.....	\$100

Membership renewal notices are sent out based on the month in which you joined the society.

NOTICE

It is urgent that the society be promptly notified of changes of address. Bulletins that cannot be delivered by the postal service will not be forwarded due to high postage rates.

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Augusta County Historical Society office and research library are located on the third floor of the R.R. Smith Center for History and Art at 20 South New Street, Staunton, VA 24401. A parking garage is located across the street.

Cover design by Jennifer Wood Lee



John Bowman Davis

Mourning an Augusta County history giant

April 13, 1951-January 28, 2021

It is with great sorrow and regret that the Augusta County Historical Society board announces the sad news of the death of our colleague, friend, and board member, John Bowman Davis. John was not only a current board member of the Augusta County Historical Society, but a person who played a key role in the Society for more than three decades. He served in the vital post of treasurer for the society from 1993-2001. He worked closely with the late Katherine Bushman and the late Richard M. Hamrick, Jr., in the years that they filled significant roles, Mrs. Bushman as genealogist, officer, and editor of the *Bulletin* and Mr. Hamrick as archivist.

For a number of years the society archives were stored in the basement of the Augusta County Courthouse, courtesy of John Davis when he was Clerk of the Court, and when it was necessary to move them, John was the lead person in obtaining an office and storage space at the Government Center in Verona for the society. That was our headquarters until the Society's move to the R.R. Smith Center for History and Art.



John was always willing to lend a hand to members of the public who came into the deed room on a research quest.

John was among the first recipients of the Augusta County Historical Society's prestigious Distinguished History Service Award, not only for his service to the society and his work with the courthouse records, but also for his teaching and sharing of our area's history. He also served on the Augusta County 250th Anniversary Committee in 1988.

John will be remembered with deep gratitude by any person who has done research in Augusta County records in recent years and by researchers for many decades into the future for his role in preserving the historical riches that these records comprise. Augusta County played a vital role in the history of frontier Virginia and its expansion westward. In its earliest days, the county stretched to the Mississippi River, and its surviving records include vital land and legal documents covering a vast area. Because Augusta County was home for a generation or two to thousands of families that moved west on the Great Wagon Road and settled in the Carolinas, Kentucky, Tennessee, Missouri, Ohio, and Indiana in the years before the Civil War, its records are among this nation's genealogical and historical treasures.

Elected Clerk of the Augusta County Circuit Court in 1982 and serving from 1983-2015, John oversaw the transformation of local record keeping from a completely paper-based and hand-or-typewriter-written operation to one that is totally digital today. In his thirty-one years as Clerk of the Court, John realized fully the value of the county record holdings and took swift and massive action to conserve them. As grants became available through the Commonwealth and from private sources such as the DAR, John was among the most energetic officials to apply for and receive the funds necessary for the costly professional conservation treatment of the rare and delicate eighteenth and early nineteenth century records, especially the wills and deeds, but many others as well.

A modest man, John sought no recognition for the work he did and always credited his assistant deputy clerk Carol Brydger. The truth is that the two, whose friendship went back to high school, were a team and together they preserved some of the finest courthouse records in the nation. John's belief that the records belong to the people and must be made available to them made the Augusta County Courthouse one of the most welcoming and accommodating to all, from attorneys to genealogists to schoolchildren, in Virginia and across the country. He gave freely of his time to open the courthouse in the evening to classes of budding genealogists and personally guided them in the use of the records stored there. That he cared for learners of all ages surely comes from his years as a teacher, counselor, and administrator in Augusta County Schools prior to his election as Clerk of Court.

John was a graduate of Wilson Memorial High School, class of 1969, and had wonderful memories and stories of growing up on "The Post." He was featured in the book and DVD, *Hope Reborn of War*. He was the SCA class president and drum major of the Wilson Memorial High School Band.

The Augusta County Historical Society extends its condolences to his wife of forty-eight years, Patrice, his two sons Andrew (wife Molly) and Joseph (wife Sarah) and their two children, Dylan Thomas and Damien James.

John loved the courthouse and our history with all his heart and soul. He is truly a giant in the annals of Augusta County's story and will be sorely missed.



John listens while his son, Joseph, speaks at the retirement event where John's portrait was unveiled and placed in the courthouse. Next to John, left to right, are his younger son Andrew, wife Patrice, and his assistant Carol Brydger, who succeeded him as Clerk of the Court.

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Augusta Historical Bulletin: Editorial Policy

The editors of the *Augusta Historical Bulletin* welcome submissions relating to any topic or period in the history of Augusta County, Virginia, and its wider environs. Submissions may take the form of articles, research notes, edited documents, or indexes to historical documents. Other formats might be acceptable, but prospective authors of such submissions are encouraged to consult with a member of the editorial board. With rare exceptions, the *Bulletin* does not publish manuscripts that focus exclusively on genealogical matters. Authors should strive to make their contributions accessible to a broad readership. In matters of form and style, authors should adhere to the guidelines and strictures set forth in the *Chicago Manual of Style*, 15th ed., or Kate L. Turabian, et al., *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, 6th ed., both of which are widely available in libraries and bookstores. A style sheet, prepared by the editors of the *Bulletin*, is available upon request. Authors should submit four double-spaced copies of their manuscripts, with endnotes where applicable, and include photocopies of any illustrations. Upon acceptance of the manuscript for publication, authors must provide an electronic copy of it, as well as publishable-quality illustrations.

Manuscripts or requests for style sheets should be sent to: The Augusta County Historical Society, Attention: Bulletin Editors, P.O. Box 686, Staunton, Virginia 24402-0686. Please try to submit proposed manuscripts by September 1, 2021. Queries may also be sent to: Nancy Sorrells (lotswife@comcast.net).

Eva Howard Clark: Life and Death in the Circus

(A Tragic Tale of the Daring Young Woman on the Flying Trapeze)

By Lucinda Cooke (with Stacey Baker)

Editor's note: *One of the most popular programs hosted by the Augusta County Historical Society has been "Conversations from the Grave: Meet the Residents of Thornrose Cemetery." Since 2008, the two organizers for this program, Lucinda Cooke and Linda Petzke, with the help of numerous volunteers and sponsors, have presented what has become a long-standing event to sell-out crowds. Over the years Cooke has added many new characters portrayed by local acting talent. There have been some outstanding favorites and one of these is Eva Clark, a lovely and dazzling trapeze performer with the Cole Bros. Circus, who was shot in a skirmish following a show in September 1906. The circumstances have always been murky, which has resulted in a mystery lasting 111 years. Visits to her gravesite by circuses, including Cole Bros., began about 1910 and have continued into the twenty-first century. Usually costumed performers, led by the ringmaster, hold a service of remembrance and lay a wreath on Eva's grave. It is interesting to note that this is a circus tradition still carried out today for those performers who may have passed away more than a century ago. This is also the way in which Eva Clark's memory survives. Her story is now the stuff of legend.*

Early in 2020, this editor introduced Lucinda Cooke to Stacey Baker, another fellow historian who had done some recent research on Eva Clark and the circus. The two met and decided to research an article that would flesh out what is certainly one of the most interesting stories in circus lore. The following article is a compilation of both known and recently discovered material, organized into a format that makes for an exciting tale of jealousy and anger that culminated in a love triangle that ended in a tragic death.

Part of Eva's story also includes the circus where she performed. The Cole Bros. Circus was formed in 1884 and continued for 133 years, closing in 2017. A circus in the early 1900s was quite a spectacle and Cole Bros. lived up to its reputation as an "immense aggregation with wonderful performers, and a brilliant display"

(Staunton Daily Leader, September 6, 1906). *The authors decided to carry the Cole Bros. circus story forward because that company frequented Staunton, Waynesboro, and Augusta County (Fishersville) many times for more than a century and grew to become one of the greatest circuses in America. Cole Bros. was the last circus to continuously hold a show under the Big Top. Each time they stopped, they contributed a bit more to the Eva Clark legend, most recently in 2014 when their ringmaster and performers returned to Eva's grave with a special service in her honor.*

Special recognition goes to Chad Ridge, circus historian and former marketing director for the Cole Bros. Circus, whose knowledge and love of the circus was immensely helpful. Thanks also go to Lynn Feingold, Randolph, Massachusetts, who provided valuable resources for this article, and to Aine Murphy Norris for valuable photographic images, and for her excellent 2020 article that helped to tie up some loose ends..

On an early fall day in 1906, Eva Clark lay peacefully, eyes closed and "in perfect peace." Just a few hours earlier the Rev. Abel Fraser of First Presbyterian Church, Staunton, had visited with Eva and they prayed together. He told her about the afterlife and she said she was not afraid to die and had put all her faith in Jesus. A short while later, Dr. Lewis, the physician who had attended her for several weeks, checked his patient. He noted her shallow breathing and sadly shook his head. Eva had been through so much since the shooting on the night of September 6. Caught by a bullet as she attempted to break up a fight between her husband and another man, Eva was struck in the abdomen, a wound that doctors would later report ripped through her intestines in sixteen places and perforated her bladder. Eva survived the initial surgery, although her physicians were cautious. She rallied, always smiling and cheerful in spite of her extreme discomfort. Townspeople were dazzled by Eva's beauty, and as a circus star performer, whose husband had apparently deserted her and fled the city, they showered her with notes, flowers, and visits in hopes these acts of kindness would speed her healing. On September 11 Eva's mother arrived to be by her side. However, toward the end of September, she rapidly declined and a second surgery was performed on Friday, September 28. There was little hope. At 8:30 in the evening on Monday, October 1, Eva quietly took her last breath and passed away. She was twenty-five.

Immediately following her death, her body was removed to "Messrs. Hamrick and Co. and embalmed." On October 3, at 4 p.m., the Rev. Abel Fraser performed the funeral at First Presbyterian Church. Crowds filled

the church to pay their respects to the young woman who had captured the sympathies and attention of the entire town. Interment took place at Thornrose Cemetery. Although Eva's husband had vanished, his older brother, A. T. "Allie" Clark^(A) had remained by her side throughout her hospital stay and made all funeral and burial arrangements. He expressed profound gratitude for all that had been done to make his sister-in-law's final weeks as pleasant as possible and for the many kindnesses of local residents. As a key figure in the Cole Bros. Circus, A. T. Clark made sure Eva received the best of care. Reportedly, he paid \$114.75 for the funeral and the cost for a silk-lined casket, a considerable sum in 1906. In today's money that would be just over \$3,340.

A stranger to Staunton, Eva could not have imagined that the fateful struggle between her husband, Lum Clark, and life-long friend, James Richards, on the night of September 6, would result in two gunshots from



Circus parades in the early 1900s were spectacular events in small towns across America. This view down Main Street (Beverley Street today) shows the excitement generated by the presence of costumed performers and exotic animals such as elephants. Very few people in those days had ever seen live animals like elephants, camels, and tigers. When the circus came to town, all businesses and schools closed down, and farmers drove their wagons in from their farms in the county. Everyone dressed in their Sunday best to watch the parade prior to the first afternoon circus performance. Note Staunton's iconic Clocktower in the background.

a .38 caliber bullet, both shots fired by her husband. The first bullet missed its target, but the second struck her down. To her dying day, Eva claimed that the bullet had not been intended for her. The mishap had been a terrible accident and her husband was innocent of attempted murder.

Exactly what happened is the stuff of legend. All three individuals were employed by the Cole Bros. Circus. They had known one another since early childhood. Eva was not only a beautiful and talented trapeze artist, but a widely acclaimed entertainer on stage. Some reports stated she could also perform amazing stunts on horseback. Lum Clark and James Richards performed as essential circus workers, assisting with set-up and take-down of the circus tents and other duties as required. Lum often served as a ticket-taker. One report in the *Staunton Daily Leader* indicated Richards may have also done trapeze work.

Eva was originally a native Texan, Lee Howard Kelley (Lee used both "Howard" and "Kelley" as a last name) and Alice Howard. Both parents



The photo of Eva Clark, left, appeared in the October 4, 1906 issue of The Cincinnati Post, shortly after Clark's death. A copy of the image can be found in the Cincinnati Library bound collection. Copy of photo courtesy of Aine Murphy Norris from a newspaper photograph.

Eva Clark's mother, right, usually performed under the name, Alice Adair. Talented and lovely, Alice was best known for her acrobatics using swinging ladders and rings. This image was found in the 1899 John Robinson's Big Shows Route Book at the Robert L. Robinson Library and Research Center archives, Circus World Museum, Baraboo, Wisconsin. It was photographed from the route book by Aine Murphy Norris.

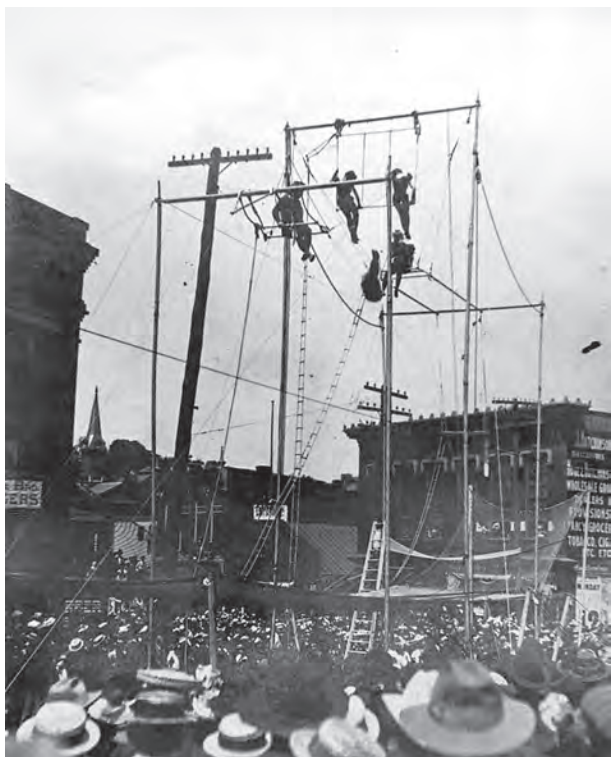




This view shows members of the John Robinson Circus troupe. It is taken from the 1901 John Robinson's Big Shows Route Book. Although not confirmed, Eva Clark may be the young woman with the tilted head in the third row, third from right. The route book is from the Robert L. Robinson Library and Research Center archives, Circus World Museum, Baraboo, Wisconsin. The image was photographed from the route book by Aine Murphy Norris.

were experienced circus and stage performers. Records are unclear, but it appears Eva Howard and James Richards were taken as young children and placed in the care of a W. C. (Wiley) Clark who owned a ranch in Brown County, Texas. Wiley Clark had four sons, the older two being A. T. Clark and Lum Clark. Several accounts state that Eva and James were orphans, and one account indicated James was Eva's brother. There is no evidence of any truth to this account, but it is true that being of a similar age to A. T. and Lum Clark, they grew up together as siblings and family. It is not known whether the Howards brought both children or just Eva.

What is known is that Eva was clearly not an orphan. In an interview with Chad Ridge, a circus historian and former director of marketing for the Cole Bros. Circus, which closed permanently in 2017, he stated that it was not unusual for circus parents to leave their young children in the care of others, hopefully providing them with a more stable upbringing than in the circus. The presence of small children provided a distraction and a danger for a circus because accidents were always possible (and likely) in an environment where workers handled heavy equipment, set-up and dismantled enormous tents – and worked with wild animals. Occasionally,



This view of circus aerialists was taken in the wharf area near the train station. The steeple of First Presbyterian Church can be seen in the background. Another identifying feature is the writing on the side of the building on the right. That building belonged to Hoge & Hutchinson, a grocery firm at 116-118 South Augusta. Photo identification courtesy of local historian Charles Culbertson.



This unidentified Staunton street shows two circus workers with their camels, likely headed back to the circus grounds after a parade. Local residents must have enjoyed watching this spectacle from their front porches and windows.



These horses with their costumed riders are probably headed back to the circus grounds following a parade. They are not in formation, but are casually returning to the circus on the outskirts of town. In 1906, the Cole Bros. Circus used the C&O Flats in Plunkettsville, an area near W. Beverley Street where the Marquis United Methodist Church and the Valley Mission are located today. This photo is taken on Frederick Street in front of Stuart Hall.



A circus parade, left, makes its way down Beverley Street. Note the Clocktower in the background.

A team of six horses pulls a heavy show wagon. The quality of the photo is not good, but some of the wagon's embossed decoration can be seen along the side. Note the people watching from the porch of the house. Any idea if this house still exists?



a child might be used in a performance capacity, but this was rare until the child reached his or her mid-teens, and even then, was frowned upon by reputable circus management who did not wish to anger a growing public who favored child labor laws enacted in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The term “orphan,” was thus often used to describe a child who grew up away from circus parents. If possible, parents and children reunited during the winter months when the circus shut down for the season. Eventually some children might train and join parents or other family members as part of a circus act. There are many records of famous trapeze and high wire families. Circus life was hard, but older children were often attracted to it as their parents had been, developing performance skills that enabled them to join a circus on their own.

Eva was apparently one of those children who became attracted to the circus world, following in her parents’ footsteps. Prior to Eva joining her parents, they performed as the Howard Troupe, traveling with several circuses. Alice was known for her amazing use of swinging ladders and ability to juggle multiple rings on her feet. Eva likely joined her parents, Lee and Alice, as early as 1889 when she appeared with them in a listing of performers for McFadden’s Amusement Enterprise and Pavilion Shows. That same year, they appeared in McClelland’s Shows and Wild West in Ridgway, Pennsylvania.^(B) By the time Eva was in her mid-to-late teens, she had perfected her skills as an accomplished aerialist. She and her parents worked for John Robinson’s Circus in 1899, 1900, and 1901. Eva and her mother sometimes worked together, as they did in 1893-1894 when they joined Price’s New Floating Opera on the Ohio River.^(C) Eva may have worked briefly with her mother for Sells & Downs in 1905. At some point, Alice Howard either separated or divorced her husband, Lee Howard, and took the name “Adair.” In 1897, Eva joined the W. C. Clark Shows in Tuscaloosa, Alabama, where Lum Clark was also employed. She was noted in the *Tuscaloosa Gazette* for being a talented singer and dancer, and much admired by audiences.^(D) In December of that year, Eva Howard Kelley married Lum Clark in Troup County, Georgia.^(E) For some years, Eva’s career included seasons in a variety of shows, sometimes with one or both parents, and Lum. By 1906, Eva Clark had joined Cole Bros. United Shows where her husband Lum, and his brother, Allie Clark, both worked. Her career had reached its zenith and she received high praise and admiration for her performances as ‘The Aerial Queen’ on the trapeze and flying rings.^(F)

Whatever bright future Eva might have had, it unraveled completely on the night of September 6, following the evening performance. Eva re-

turned to her dressing room where she was apparently met by Richards. That, in itself, was a serious issue because men were not allowed to enter a female performer's dressing room or wagon. The penalty was immediate dismissal. A heated discussion ensued when suddenly Lum Clark burst into the room and proceeded to argue with Richards. He pulled a gun and fired. He missed, but the enraged Richards charged forward and attempted to grapple with Lum. He fired again, striking Eva in the abdomen as she tried to wrestle the men apart.

Desperate to leave town as quickly as possible because of the incident, Eva was taken by Cole Bros. Circus workers to the train that would carry the circus to their next destination. In just over an hour, the entire circus was dismantled and loaded on the nearby train. However, it was clear that Eva was gravely injured, and a Dr. Lewis was summoned to examine her injuries. He made immediate arrangements to have her taken to King's Daughters' Hospital where surgeons spent several hours trying to repair the damage caused by the gunshot wound. Reportedly, Eva's husband accompanied or followed the doctor to the hospital.

In the meantime, Col. H.H. Wayt, police justice, had learned of the affair and sent Officers Lipscomb and Cline to the show grounds at the C&O Flats in Plunkettsville around 11 p.m. to stop the circus from leaving town and arrest both Clark and Richards. Much to their dismay, the circus was gone, and the suspects were nowhere to be found. The officers returned to the city and immediately went to King's Daughters' Hospital where Lipscomb and Cline discovered a man who identified himself as Eva's husband, Lum Clark. The officers summoned Col. Wayt and Captain Carter Braxton, commonwealth's attorney, to the hospital. For the second time that evening, Clark eluded the authorities and managed to escape. A subsequent search of the circus train failed to locate Clark and the police permitted the train to leave for Charlottesville at 3 a.m. Later that day, the officers went to Charlottesville in hopes of finding Clark. Their efforts failed and they returned empty-handed.

Meanwhile, A.T. Clark agreed to accompany Officer Lipscomb back to Staunton to answer questions from the authorities and to look after his sister-in-law. *The Daily Leader* stated the following: "Mr. A.T. Clark, who has charge of all the stock of the show and superintends the loading and unloading, came back with officer Lipscomb. He is a pleasant gentleman and spoke very freely about the affair." He said that following the shooting incident, both Lum Clark and Richards assured him it was an accident. A.T. Clark told the police he was certain that his brother would surrender and

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MIKE ROONEY

Circus ads, such as these that appeared in the Staunton newspapers, were intended to whip up enthusiasm for the amazing spectacles patrons could see nowhere else. Ads ran in the newspaper for several weeks prior to the arrival of the circus. The advertisement just above included a listing of acts and performers the public could expect to enjoy. Note Eva Clark's name is listed near the center bottom.

face the consequences. Unfortunately, Lum Clark completely disappeared and would never see his wife again. It has been suggested that he did make one attempt to contact her some weeks after the incident, but by then Eva had taken a turn for the worse. Lum fled the country, but then resurfaced a year or so later, joining his siblings in Louisiana and his uncle, M. L. Clark's show. Lum continued his circus career and married a Louisiana woman, Eugenia Ricaud, in 1908. They had two children. Following retirement, Lum moved to Tuscaloosa, Alabama where he passed away in 1936 at the age of fifty-nine. He is buried in Tuscaloosa Memorial Park.^(G)

Was the shooting an accident? A. T. Clark certainly indicated that when he stated that his "brother and Richards had a little difficulty and his brother threw out his hand with the revolver in it to ward off a blow from Richards and the gun went off without his intending it, the ball striking his wife who was standing to one side. . . He said he and his brother took Mrs. Clark first to the train, and then his brother took her to King's Daughters' Hospital." It would be interesting to know what the "little difficulty" was and why it necessitated that Lum Clark, not just have a gun in his possession, but in his hand. Did the gun really go off accidentally?

Sources from the circus interpreted the circumstances in a variety of ways. One said that Richards was drunk and Lum used the gun to defend himself. A second account from circus witnesses stated that Richards had entered Eva's dressing room and "abused the woman, cursing and roughing her up a bit." Another source said Richards was angry about the way Clark had been treating his wife and confronted him about it. Yet, another source stated that Lum and his wife had been happily married for two years and Richards was the jealous lover. Another interesting detail was the fact that at least some circus members were aware James Richards and Eva had been "adopted" by Lum and A.T. Clark's father. At some point, both Richards and Clark became rivals and their jealousy over Eva was no secret among circus folk. Suffice to say, Eva would claim repeatedly until her dying breath that her husband was innocent.

There being no cause to capture and arrest Richards, he quickly rejoined the Cole Bros. Circus a day or two after the incident. The police took Eva at her word and decided the whole ordeal was a ghastly accident and dropped the search for Clark. One story further indicates that "Eva's strange affiliation with the two men gradually came to the attention of the police, who promptly ignored the bombshell." This "strange affiliation" that had characterized James, Lum, and Eva for many years, implied both a rivalry, a motive, and perhaps an ill-fated love triangle that finally ended in a tragic accident. . . or murder.

This sad tale becomes further complicated by the fact that *The Cincinnati Enquirer* in May of 1903 stated that Eva petitioned for divorce from Lum because he had “refused to live with her since their marriage in Georgia in 1897, and has refused to provide for her in any way. Besides, he has beaten her and threatened to kill her, and did shoot at her Charles Ryan, attorney.” Born in 1881, Eva would have been about sixteen when she married Lum. This information points to the fact that she had been married far longer than the two years suggested by some Cole Bros. Circus workers and the *Staunton Daily Leader*. Lum likely joined Cole Bros., convincing his wife to drop the petition for divorce and to live as a married couple. The exact timeline is difficult to establish, but Eva may have joined Lum sometime in 1905, which would indicate they were with the circus together for a little less than two years prior to the shooting. Circus folk may well have thought their marriage began shortly before Eva joined Cole Bros. to be with Lum, hence the repeated mention of a two-year marital timeframe. In yet another article from October 3, 1906, *The Cincinnati Enquirer*, stated that “Clark loved his wife devotedly, but when his jealousy was excited was prone to make implied threats.”

Easily angered and jealous of Richards, Lum’s hostility turned violent. Eva was caught in the middle and the resulting scene was a recipe for disaster. In the same article from October 3, *The Cincinnati Enquirer* further noted she “was found writhing in pain upon the floor, while near her lay a revolver. She stated then that she was handling the revolver when it was accidentally discharged. She clung to this story until death sealed her lips.” However, “authorities of that city [Staunton] and her friends hold a different opinion.” This report deviates somewhat from the accepted story about the two men arguing and then Lum firing his gun twice. Suffice to say, members of the circus heard the gunfire and the men arguing while Eva pleaded for them to stop. As mentioned previously, Eva insisted throughout her weeks in the hospital, that she wasn’t the intended victim and her husband was innocent. One last bit of incriminating evidence appeared a few days after her death in *The Cincinnati Enquirer* on October 5, 1906. It is a short article about the disappearance of Eva’s husband. The title read: “HUSBAND’S DISAPPEARANCE Leads to the Theory of Foul Play in the Eva Clark Case.”

A logical question here is why were there so many articles about Eva Clark in *The Cincinnati Enquirer*. Circuses routinely shut down in November or early December and moved to their winter quarters for several months of the year. Many circus performers needed to find work to tide them over until spring. Eva performed as a singer and vaudeville entertainer at the

Commodore Concert Hall in Cincinnati, using both her maiden name, Howard, and married name, Clark. For a number of winter seasons she was a great favorite there and quite popular in the entertainment community. When she first appeared at the Commodore, she so impressed the “proprietor that he took her to his home on Price Hill, as she was penniless.” The proprietor, Mr. Brannigan, and his wife, took Eva under their wing and provided a temporary home during her stay in Cincinnati. What became of her husband, Lee Howard (Kelley), is not known.

Back in its heyday, Vine Street in Cincinnati was the epicenter for all forms of entertainment. There were concert halls, including the Commodore, beer gardens, saloons, burlesque houses and variety shows. Orchestras, shooting galleries, and even bowling alleys, could be found along the street. The elite rubbed elbows with politicians and all manner of gamblers and “that motley crowd . . . that mixed in goodly fellowship with the happy denizens of Over-the-Rhine.” This immigrant German community established Cincinnati in ‘the mellow years before the first World War’ as the ‘wettest’ city between New York and Chicago. The Commodore was one of the numerous pre-eminent “concert halls that towered above the big hills,” all featuring “fine food, drink, music, dancing, and panoramic views of the city . . .” This was where Eva made her seasonal home. Fellow performers and the public loved her. Her mother, Alice Adair (Howard) had also made a home in the West End of Cincinnati. What became of her husband, Art Adair (Lee Howard), is not known.

When the news arrived in Cincinnati that Eva Clark had been shot by her husband, accidentally, or otherwise, Mr. and Mrs. Brannigan telegraphed



For decades a wreath appears by Eva Clark's grave each Christmas season. It is mysteriously placed during the night and no one knows who sends it. The placement of this wreath is one of Thornrose Cemetery's best kept secrets.

funds to Staunton to help with hospital care and doctors' expenses. When the news came that she had died from her gunshot wounds the Brannigans made immediate plans to leave for Staunton to "claim the body and bring it to this city, where it will be given interment at Mr. Brannigan's expense." Apparently, Mrs. Brannigan left on her own and arrived to find that Staunton authorities had decided to bury Eva in Thornrose Cemetery. The funeral had already taken place as well as the burial. A distraught Mrs. Brannigan telegraphed her husband and arrangements with a local funeral home were cancelled. It was reported by *The Cincinnati Enquirer* on October 4 that Mrs. Brannigan would make yet another attempt to bring Eva back, but that failed. Lum Clark was still on the loose and the newspaper stated his brother A.T. Clark was insistent that his brother give himself up.

As stated previously, James Richards rejoined the Cole Bros. Circus shortly after the shooting. He had not been affiliated with the show for very long. Prior to that he had worked for the M. L. (Mack) Clark & Sons Combined Shows in 1904. M. L. Clark, a much younger brother of W. C. (Wiley) Clark, was also from Brown County, Texas. Their father, Joe Clark, died when Mack was young and he took over his father's ranch, cutting and hauling lumber "for the first frame house in Coleman, Texas. He later operated a freight hauling business out of Brownwood, Texas, a railhead." By 1885, M. L. joined his older brother, W. C. who had been bitten by the show bug and had formed a wagon show, known as the Clark Bros. Shows. The two brothers had their ups and downs, touring until 1891 when the Clark Bros. Circus finally closed. W. C. Clark tried to stay in show business for a few years. By this time, his four sons were associated with him. These included A.T. Clark, Lum Clark, Willie Clark, and Lonny Clark. He later retired from show business and bought a hotel in Atoka, Oklahoma. W. C. Clark passed away in the early 1900s. His brother, M. L. Clark went out on his own, started a medicine show and moved up to a much larger production that included an elephant and camel who traveled with the show to each stop and were inseparable. By the very early 1900s, M. L. Clark owned property in Alexandria, Louisiana, that provided ample winter quarters for his show. Then, in 1904, James Richards joined Clark's enterprise. By 1906, he had moved on to the Cole Bros. Circus. Since Richards had been exonerated of any crime following the shooting incident, he continued working circuses, and was last known to work for the Hagenbeck-Wallace Circus in 1923.

It may be coincidence, but James Richards joined the Hagenbeck-Wal-

lace Circus the same year it came to Staunton. No one had ever placed a stone to mark Eva Clark's grave so circus "personnel raised sufficient money by voluntary contribution to have the present stone erected in 1923," seventeen years after her death. The same Officer Lipscomb who had been one of the officers that had attempted to catch and arrest Lum Clark the night of September 6, 1906, was now Staunton Chief of Police and was delegated to "look into the costs attendant on putting up an appropriate stone, and after he had made the selection, he sent these friends [Hagenbeck-Wallace Circus] a picture of his selection with cost particulars. A check was forwarded soon . . ." "And for years thereafter the Hagenbeck-Wallace Circus band, whenever in Staunton, always went to the grave, between the afternoon and night performances, and played a brief concert. Bands with other circuses, familiar with the tragic case also usually played there during their annual visits."

As early as 1910, a group of nearly two hundred people, including circus performers, attended a memorial service at her gravesite. The Rev. Abel Fraser, who had prayed by Eva's side after the shooting and who officiated at her funeral, conducted the service. The Howe's "circus band and troupe marched from the show grounds to the cemetery in a body, where they met Fraser and played 'Nearer My God to Thee' as an opening piece and tears came to the eyes of nearly every person present. Later that same year, the Robinson Circus also held a service in Eva Clark's honor, "while beautiful tributes were paid to her memory." Her gravesite was covered in flowers. The Barnett Brothers Show paid their respects in April 1931. The band played a requiem and performers placed a wreath on Eva's grave.

Over the years, many circuses continued to honor her in this way so that Eva Clark's memory stayed in the minds of circus folk, even among those who never met her. This was a common tradition of remembrance and is still practiced today.

When the circus bands played no more, circus performers continued to visit her grave, always in full costume. In the 1980s, members of the Clyde Beatty-Cole Bros. Circus, in conjunction with the Circus Fans of America, held a graveside memorial service for Eva. Circus ringmaster, Jimmy James "was on hand for the ceremony, which was attended by about a dozen people." James Coffman of the Circus Fans of America offered the eulogy. He was noted as "a self-described circus fan and historian from Alexandria." The Cole Bros. Circus visited Staunton again in September 2014. Ringmaster Chris Connors brought performers and clowns to another commemorative

service in Eva's honor. Clowns laid a wreath at her grave and that night's opening performance was dedicated to her memory. Circuses are far and few between these days, but Eva Clark is still remembered with a wreath that appears anonymously during the Christmas season. Who places the wreath is a well-guarded secret.



(Top photo) On September 2, 2014, performers with the Cole Bros. Circus visited the grave of Eva Clark, a Cole Bros. trapeze artist who died from a gunshot wound she received the night of September 6, 1906. Ringmaster (far left) Chris Connors offered a memorial testimony in honor of Clark. In the bottom photo, Marvin of Mexico, a Cole Bros. Circus clown, placed a wreath of flowers as a remembrance to the lovely trapeze performer the circus never forgot. (Courtesy of the Cole Brothers Circus)

To this day, the superintendent of Thornrose Cemetery receives more requests for directions to Eva's grave than any other. One can't help but speculate whether way back in 1923 when the Hagenbeck-Wallace Circus came to town, if James Richards might have assisted with raising funds for a stone to mark Eva's grave, either as a tribute to what might have been, or as a way to finally bring closure to a tragic affair.

Cole Bros. United Shows

The American circus began in the early 1800s, and for decades before the advent and rapid spread of railroads, small shows traveled from town to town in what were referred to as "mud wagons" because muddy, badly rutted roads were the only means of transportation in a largely rural America. The appearance of railroads, particularly after the Civil War, enabled circuses to dramatically expand from a few wagons pulled by horses or mules, to enormous caravans that housed all the heavy equipment, wild animal cages, and elaborate wagons used in parades and by performers and circus acts. These could be loaded onto anywhere between ten and thirty modified train cars consisting of flat cars for bulk items such as tents, poles, and parade wagons. Special cars housing elephants had doors on both sides to facilitate loading and unloading. Some held as many as a dozen elephants. There were also stock cars to hold performing ponies/horses, as well as teams of horses that pulled parade wagons. Train travel allowed circuses to maintain scheduled performance stops that would be daunting even by today's standards. Nearly every town maintained a train station and tracks where a circus could offload their cars in an expedient fashion. When the Cole Bros. United Shows arrived in Staunton in early September, 1906, they offloaded the circus at the C&O Flats and set up their tents in an area then known as Plunkettsville, near today's Marquis United Methodist Church, just off West Beverley Street.

Coach cars were used for the staff, performers, and management. Staff coaches were usually jammed with employees who were the lowest paid workers. Star performers and owners/managers had quarters that were more spacious and could be used for dining purposes. Well-dressed waiters served quality meals on china instead of the tin plates used by workers.

The railroads supplied the locomotive and train crews, which consisted of the engineer, fireman, conductor, and brakemen. The circus paid for their services. Charges for the circus cars were based on how many and not weight or length. The cars were loaded with as much material as



William Washington Cole, the founder of Cole Bros. Circus is pictured here. In 1844, he first introduced "W.W. Cole's New Colossal Shows." It became an instant success and the name was shortened to "Cole Bros. Circus" by 1900. This photo was featured in the 2014 Cole Bros. Circus program.

possible. Over time, the car length increased from about forty feet to over eighty feet. As the needs of the circus changed, so might the locomotives and crew. Once circus season was over, usually by mid-November, a show would move to winter quarters to rest weary animals, make repairs, and plan for the next circus season.

A well-run circus was an exhausting endeavor. Circuses like Cole Bros. kept detailed route books that not only included all scheduled stops, but also listed the performers, acts, animals, and other noteworthy details so that the advance men and management knew exactly what could be expected throughout the circus season. It was not unusual for changes to occur if performers or troupes left during the season, making it necessary to find replacements. New animals or acts might be added, and all of these were carefully recorded in the route books. A first-rate circus had to operate like a well-honed machine. Circus workers were divided into teams, each with a specific task to perform like clockwork. For example, in 1908, the Cole Bros. Circus made an extraordinary ninety-five stops for performances between April and mid-November. They operated Monday through Saturday, but not on Sunday. Respectable circuses did not perform on Sundays, a nod to clergy and families to keep the Sabbath holy. Also, Sunday was usually a travel day.

How did circuses publicize themselves? It wasn't enough to just show up at the train station. All shows used advance men who could travel



When the circus came to town, Staunton residents expected to see a parade, such as this one, through the city's downtown.

ahead of the circus to purchase newspaper advertising, and place posters around town. Many of the posters were magnificent examples of illustrative art, usually in full color. They depicted the exciting world of circus performance, including star performers and wild animals. If permitted, these posters were plastered on every available blank wall or fence in town. Advance men had to be on their toes, however, because if a competing circus was in the area, they often hired ruffians to tear the posters down and put theirs up to draw attention away from the show before its arrival. Newspapers usually carried ads well in advance of the circus's entrance into town. In 1906, nearly a month before the Cole Bros. Circus arrived in Staunton on September 6, ads appeared daily in the *Staunton Daily Leader*.

One of the most important jobs for the advance man was to secure the tremendous quantity of supplies needed to feed animals such as hay and corn, as well as food for all the circus employees. These needed to be readily available as soon as the circus arrived. Because every train station had a telegraph, it was relatively easy for the advance man to communicate with the show. Being an advance man was a big job because circuses might be in a different town every day. If circus workers were in short supply, the advance man could hire locals to help with the heavy work involved in setting up and taking down the tents. When the show was over and the spectators left, the big tent came down, was loaded, and the train pulled out. The weary performers and circus workers would sleep on the train

as it made its way to the next stop, often arriving early the next morning, only to repeat the whole process again.

By the turn of the twentieth century, the circus was the most popular form of public entertainment in America. Movies and large organized sport teams like baseball and football were still in their earliest stages of development. Radio and television did not exist. The many shows that traveled across the nation dominated the entertainment scene. Larger circuses would arrive at their destination well before dawn. Often several trains were involved. With precision timing, the trains would unload cooks to prepare breakfast, then the tents and poles, then seating for thousands, and finally the performers and animals.

Street parades were very popular and helped to whip up enthusiasm for the upcoming show. All businesses and schools closed for the day so that everyone had a chance to attend this free parade. Onlookers wore their Sunday best and the street, as well as building balconies and windows, were crowded with people hoping to see all that the parade offered. Teams of white horses, clowns, acrobats, and wild animals were favorites, especially elephants. Circus bands played the latest music, along with old favorites, and some circuses used a calliope, a large musical instrument equipped with steam whistles played from a keyboard. Horse acts were always among the most popular, so circuses might parade some of their finest horses along with brightly costumed equestrian performers atop



In 1906, few people had seen exotic animals except in picture books. Cole Bros. included just a sampling of the wild animals in their ad for the upcoming circus. Even caged animals reproduced and babies were a favorite

the teams, hinting at the spectacles the public would see later in the circus ring. A giant circus like Ringling Brothers once boasted as many as 650 horses in the early 1900s. One of their most famous acts was to form a large pyramid with sixty-one horses all raised at varying heights, and topped by a magnificent Arabian horse.

By the late 1800s, large American circuses sometimes brought their shows to Europe. Barnum & Bailey spent five years in Europe, but when they returned to the United States, Ringling Brothers had taken over as America's "Greatest Show on Earth," a title originally associated with the Barnum & Bailey Circus. Ringling bought out Barnum & Bailey, forming the twentieth century Ringling Brothers, Barnum & Bailey Circus.

The Cole Bros. Circus story began in 1884, calling itself "W.W. Cole's New Colossal Shows." Circus founder, W.W. Cole stated that his show was staged "in a reputable manner by reputable people." This reassured everyone that Cole Bros. provided wholesome, family entertainment. It shouldn't be surprising that some circuses, especially in the earlier days, catered mostly to men who came to enjoy the side shows which offered undignified and degrading acts, gambling, peep shows and sleazy performers. W.W. Cole's marketing skills and use of state-of-the-art equipment



Cole Bros. Circus posters from the past.

built his New Colossal Shows into a highly successful circus. When he passed away in 1915, his estate was worth five million dollars. In the early 1900s, Martin J. Downs, a Canadian showman, and his son James bought the circus, and by 1906 had renamed it the Cole Bros. United Shows. The circus thrived and continued to grow.

When the Cole Bros. Circus announced a stop in Staunton scheduled for September 6, 1906, ads in the *Staunton Daily Leader* and other related papers, began to appear in August. The Camels are Coming with Cole Bros. Circus was featured on page two in the August 27 issue and focused on a herd of camels as a key attraction in the menagerie of animals the circus owned. The article began: "The sober, quiet innocent-looking camels in a menagerie are always objects of no little interest, because of their peculiar form. With the herd in Cole Brothers United Shows, which are billed to appear in Staunton on Thursday, September 6, are to be found some of the finest specimens ever exhibited in this or any other country, including the only living giant wild black camel known to man." The remainder of the article told the story of hunters who were searching for rare animals for Cole Bros. and happened on a small herd of camels following the lead of a huge black camel who towered above the others. The hunters decide to capture this unusual animal. They finally succeeded "but the chase was a lengthy and strenuous one and before the prize was finally taken several battles royal were fought with Black King Camel victorious in all but the last one . . . Scientists and all students of natural history will find this untamable quadruped an interesting study." Newspaper circus ads featured this rare beast as the "The Great Black Wild Bactrian Camel – only one ever seen in America – Direct from the Mountains of the Hindoo Koosh."

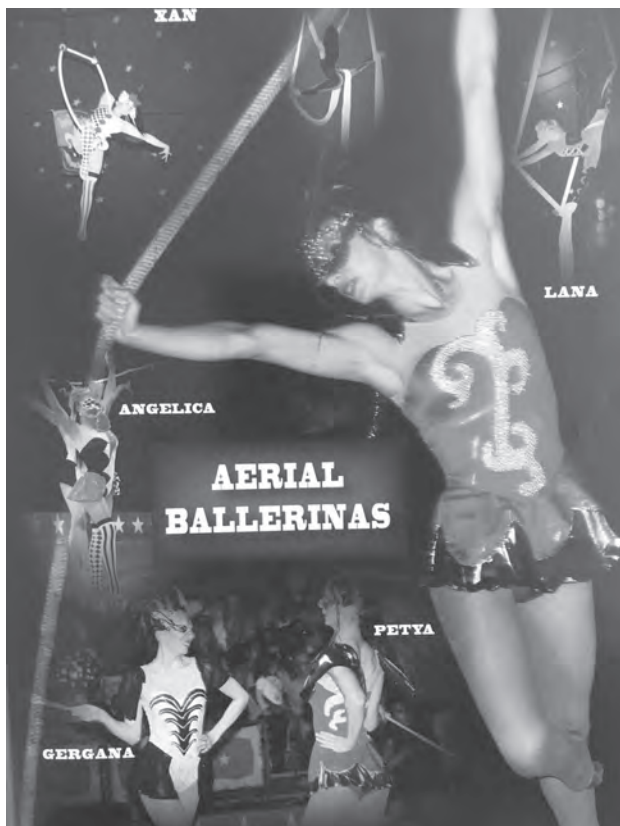
The September 6, 1906, Cole Bros. Circus must have been amazing, even without all the hype. A short article in the *Staunton Daily Leader* on September 6, titled The Great United Shows to Appear Here Today, said: "This is the day for the great Cole Brothers United Shows to spread the big tent in Staunton. The show, according to accounts where it has been appearing, is an immense aggregation with wonderful performers, and a brilliant display." An accompanying circus ad from the *Staunton Spectator & Vindicator*, presented what patrons could expect to see. A partial listing included more than 300 performers, 103 cages, dens, and tableaux cars, three huge rings, three huge stages, three combined menageries, and three equine fairs. Besides the huge, black Bactrian camel, there were black tigers who were "NEVER HAPPY UNLESS THEY'RE MAD," and Cole "OWNED THE ONLY ONES EVER SEEN ON THE GLOBE." Also described were

ASTOUNDING SUPERIOR HIGH-CLASS FEATURES" that included headliner performers like Eva Clark, plus numerous other aerial acts and troupes. A new feature that year was M'lle D'Zizzi, a "Charming Parisian Belle in a Fearful, Frightful, Frenzied, Flying Flight SPANNING DEATH'S ARCH." Apparently, M'lle Zizzi rode down an enormous arch on a bicycle, flew over a large open space and landed on the other side, coasting to a stop. The ad stated SHE FLIRTS TWICE DAILY WITH DEATH.

Last but not least, Cole Bros. featured five bands, forty-one clowns, trained dogs and ponies, educated elephants, and the free, morning circus parade that preceded the afternoon and evening performances. Impressive, ornate wagons, many of them themed, brought color and drama to the parade. Some wagons doubled as animal cages, while others, called tableaux, depicted exotic painted scenes or figures from foreign lands. One later Cole Bros. tableau, called "Asia," portrayed Asian figures from throughout the Middle and Far East. The parade remained a staple feature of Cole Bros. until 1939.

Another feature of Cole Bros. and other circuses of the day included side show attractions. These might include acrobats, jugglers, knife throwers, sword swallowers, fire eaters and magicians. Although a listing of side show activities could not be located for the Cole Bros. Circus in 1906, the aforementioned acts were listed in newspaper stories in later years. These acts were intended to amaze rather than shock patrons. Side shows typically followed the circus but were not always directly affiliated with it. As mentioned previously, some side shows were unsavory affairs with "freaks" who were actually fakes like the wolf-man or were poor, deformed individuals, true outcasts of society used to frighten patrons with their bizarre appearance. However, Siamese twins, the tall man, tattooed lady, midgets, fat or bearded women, and anything with two heads, were staple figures inside shows well into the twentieth century.

In a short history of the Cole Bros. Circus included in their 2014 program, Cole Bros. Circus of the Stars, the article stated that in the 1920s, the King brothers purchased Cole Bros. and brought the show out west, appearing at military installations, mining camps, and remote towns across the frontier. Howard and Floyd King enjoyed success until the Great Depression when the circus nearly closed the show forever. Fortunately, two enterprising individuals, Zack Terrell and Jess Adkins, purchased the circus and restructured the entire show. By 1935, Cole Bros. Circus required thirty-five double-length railroad cars to move it from one destination to the next. Terrell and Adkins had achieved "a circus equal in magnitude to Ringling Bros., the largest American circus of the era."



Aerial performers have always been a favorite for circus fans. Typically such acts that involved the trapeze, high wires, and swinging ladders were dangerous and required highly skilled individuals. Some even worked without nets. This photo is from the Cole Bros. 2014 circus program. When Cole Bros. visited Staunton that year, they performed under the big top at Expo in Fishersville.

In 2014, the Cole Bros. Circus celebrated its 130th anniversary. The opening performance in Staunton took place on September 2 and spectators received the colorful program pictured here.



In 1935, legendary wild animal trainer, Clyde Beatty joined Cole Bros., becoming a headliner for the show. Armed with only a whip and a pistol by his side, Beatty's command in a ring with multiple wild animals astounded audiences. His fame spread and initiated a decades-long link between the Cole Bros. and Clyde Beatty names. "Reading like a Who's Who in entertainment, the roster of Cole Bros. Circus alumni" included "Emmett Kelly who created the immortal 'Weary Willie' character, the Zacchini Human Cannonball act, the Cristiani Family bareback riders, the Great Wallendas, and a young Burt Lancaster on the Flying trapeze." The late 1930s and 1940s were the heyday for Cole Bros. Circus. By 1939, it was the last show to stage daily, horse-drawn parades. "As the American landscape changed, Cole Bros. had to adapt. In the



Scenes from Staunton's past when the circus came to town. (All local period circus photos are from the Hamrick Collection in the ACHS Archives)

1940s, Cole Bros. left its ornate parade wagons in the barns at its winter quarters, bringing them out only for special occasions such as Truman's inaugural parade in Washington, D.C., where Cole's steam calliope played 'Meet Me in St. Louis, Louis.'

In the 1950s, circuses began to feel the competition from movie theatres, television, and large sporting events. Ringling Brothers no longer used tents and performed in sports arenas. However, new Cole Bros. Circus owners, Jerry Colins, Walter Kernan, Randolph Calhoun, and Frank McClosky decided to keep their show under the big tent. They converted the circus to a truck show by 1957, and purchased fairgrounds in DeLand, Florida as winter quarters. Thus, the Clyde Beatty-Cole Bros. Circus enjoyed continued success in the 1960s and 1970s. The circus was donated to Florida State University by Jerry Collins "pledging his desire" to "benefit people of all ages" and "to preserve the tented circus for children and also to help the students at FSU." In 1982, Florida State University sold this gift for \$2,500,000 to "Cole veteran John W. Pugh and Doug Holwadel."

Committed to the legacy of always presenting a reputable show, the Cole Bros Circus lived up to its ideal through a succession of ownerships that enabled it to grow into a mighty American circus, and always under the big top. In the twenty-first century, changing tastes in entertainment provided serious competition for the circus and numbers dwindled. The costs and logistics of staging a large show, permits and restrictions required by each venue, and animal rights groups all combined to make it virtually impossible for the Cole Bros. to continue as they had for 133 years. Owner, John Pugh finally closed the show in 2017.

Endnotes

¹*Staunton Daily Leader*, October 3, 1906.

²*Staunton Daily Leader*, September 12, 1906 and *Staunton Daily Leader*, October 2, 1906.

³*Ibid.*

⁴Op Cit.

⁵*Ibid.*

⁶*Staunton Daily Leader*, October 3, 1906.

⁷*Staunton Daily Leader*, September 8, 1906 and *Staunton Daily Leader*, "Mrs. L. R. Clark," October 2, 1906.

⁸*Relative Value of the U.S. Dollar – Measuring Worth*, www.measuringworth.com.

⁹*Staunton Daily Leader*, September 7, 1906 and *Staunton Daily Leader*, October 2, 1906.

¹⁰*Staunton News Leader*, Performer Honors Continue by John Wells, 1980s. No exact date found.

¹¹*Staunton Daily Leader*, September 8, 1906.

¹²*Ibid.*

¹³Interview with Chad Ridge conducted by phone on May 6, 2020.

¹⁴Childress, Micah D. *Circus Life: Performing and Laboring Under America's Big Top Shows, 1830-1920*. The University of Tennessee Press, Knoxville, TN, 2018, 24-25, 27.

¹⁵Letter written by Dawn Tucker to The Circus Blog.com, June 12, 2018.

¹⁶*Ibid.*

¹⁷Childress, Micah D. *Circus Life: Performing and Laboring Under America's Big Top Shows, 1830-1920*.

¹⁸*Staunton Daily Leader*, September 7, 1906.

¹⁹*Ibid.*

²⁰Ibid.

²¹*Staunton Daily Leader*, September 8, 1906.

²²Ibid.

²³In a 1959 issue of *The White Top*, an article about Eva Clark written by E. L. K. of the *Staunton News Leader*, stated that Lum Clark sent a telegraph to the *Staunton Daily Leader* from Mexico on September 29. By this time, Eva had undergone a second surgery and was near death, 20.

²⁴Op Cit.

²⁵*Staunton News Leader*, "Performer Honors Continue" by John Wells, 1980s.

²⁶*Circus Report*, Number 4, Volume 28, January 24, 2000. *Special Story* by Terry Shulman.

²⁷In a 1959 issue of a circus magazine, *The White Top*, an article appeared written by E. L. K. of the *Staunton News Leader* indicating that the shooting had to have been an accident because Eva and Lum Clark had enjoyed a two-year marriage that was "most pleasant." 20.

²⁸Ibid,

²⁹*The Cincinnati Enquirer*, May 31, 1903, 28.

³⁰*The Cincinnati Enquirer*, October 3, 1906.

³¹Ibid.

³²Ibid.

³³Ibid.

³⁴Ibid.

³⁵Google Books. *Cincinnati: A Guide to the Queen City and Its Neighbors, Compiled by the Workers of the writer's Program of the Work Projects Administration in the State of Ohio. American Guide Series Illustrated. Sponsored by the City of Cincinnati, Ohio.* The Wiesen-Hart Press, Cincinnati. Copyright 1943 by the City of Cincinnati, Ohio. First Printed in May 1943," 104.

³⁶Op Cit.

³⁷Ibid.

³⁸Letter written by Dawn Tucker to The Circus Blog.com, June 12, 2018. Letter found in March, 2020.

³⁹Newsletter. *Bandwagon*, Vol. 9, No. 2. Circus Historical Society, March – April 1965. "The M. L. Clark Show" by Homer C. Walton, 4-11.

⁴⁰Ibid.

⁴¹Ibid.

⁴²Letter written by Dawn tucker to The Circus Blog.com, June 12, 2018. Letter found in March, 2020.

⁴³*Staunton News Leader*, September 14, 1923 and *Staunton News Leader*, September 15, 1923.

⁴⁴Ibid.

⁴⁵The 1959 issue of *The White Top*, an article about Eva Clark was written by E. L. K. of the *Staunton News Leader* about the memorial visits to the gravesite at Thornrose Cemetery by a variety of circuses throughout the years since Eva's death in 1906.

⁴⁶*Staunton Spectator and Vindicator*, September 2, 1910, p.2, and *Staunton News Leader*, Circus trapeze Artist Dies in Shootout in Staunton by Terry Shulman, June 2, 2001, 6.

⁴⁷Ibid.

⁴⁸*Staunton News Leader*, April 22, 1931, 1.

⁴⁹As recently as September 3, 2014, The Cole Bros. Circus held a memorial service for Eva at her gravesite in Thornrose Cemetery. The ringmaster led the service, accompanied by clowns, performers, and a number of spectators. A wreath was placed by her headstone.

⁵⁰*Staunton News Leader*, Performer Honors Continue, by John Wells, 1980s. No exact date found.

⁵¹Op Cit.

⁵²Numerous articles over the years have speculated about this mysterious wreath that appears each Christmas season. No one really knows who delivers it in the dead of night, but it is always there. Some have said a local organization called "Saints and Sinners" is responsible, but there is no basis for that notion.

⁵³In an interview with Thornrose Superintendent, Suzanne Berry, in June, 2020, she indicated that the only other individual buried at Thornrose who possibly gets as much attention is Jedediah Hotchkiss, the surveyor and mapmaker for Stonewall Jackson.

⁵⁴*Staunton News Leader*, Performer Honors Continue, by John Wells, 1980s. No exact date found.

⁵⁵Childress, Micah D. *Circus Life: Performing and Laboring Under America's Big Top Shows, 1830-1920.* The University of Tennessee Press, Knoxville, Tenn., 2018.

⁵⁶Ibid.

⁵⁷Ibid.

⁵⁸"Cole Bros. Circus routes, 1908," Circus Historical Society. Routes courtesy of Pfening Collection.

⁵⁹Op Cit.

⁶⁰Ibid.

⁶¹*Staunton Daily Leader*, August 29, 1906, p.2 and *Staunton Dispatch and News*, September 1, 1906.

⁶²Childress, Micah D. *Circus Life: Performing and Laboring Under America's Big Top Shows, 1830-1920*. The University of Tennessee Press, Knoxville, Tenn., 2018.

⁶³*The Circus*. https://www.classzone.com/net_explorations/U6/U6_article3.cfm.

⁶⁴*Ibid.*

⁶⁵*Ibid.*

⁶⁶Program. *Cole Bros. Circus of the Stars*, 2014, included a history of their circus.

⁶⁷Interview on May 6, 2020 with Chad Ridge, circus historian and former marketing director for Cole Bros. Circus.

⁶⁸Op Cit.

⁶⁹*Staunton Daily Leader*, September 6, 1906.

⁷⁰Cole Bros. Circus always held two performances, one in the afternoon and another in the evening. The parade took place in the morning at 10 a.m. Judging by photos of circuses taken in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the parade routes followed a course down Beverly Street, then known as Main Street, but in the opposite direction that traffic flows today.

⁷¹This tableau-type wagon went through several ownerships beginning with Ringling Bros. Circus. The Cole Bros. Circus purchased the wagon in 1934, where it toured from 1935 through 1938. It was eventually donated to the Circus World Museum in 1961. The museum is located in Baraboo, WI. "Asia" has been completely restored to its 1935 appearance. "Circus Wagon – An Educational Project of the Circus Historical Society, Inc." Circus Historical Society, www.circushistory.org.

⁷²*Staunton News Leader*, March 26, 1975, 3.

⁷³Program. *Cole Bros. Circus of the Stars*, 2014, included a history of the circus.

⁷⁴*Ibid.*

⁷⁵*Ibid.*

⁷⁶*Ibid.*

⁷⁷*Ibid.*

⁷⁸There is some discrepancy as to whether the Cole Bros. Circus wrapped up in 2016 or 2017. They certainly prepared for both seasons as dated photos of the circus performers and circus workers attest. Circus historian and former marketing director, Chad Ridge, stated in an interview on May 6, 2020, that the official closing date was 2017.

Additional Endnotes

(A) Correspondence with Aine Murphy Norris, November 3, 2020. Norris indicated the great-grandson of Lum and Allie Clark spelled "Allie" based on family photos and documents. The name was often spelled "Alley" in newspaper and other accounts, however this author deferred to the family's spelling of Allie's name.

(B) Aine Murphy Norris, "Lore No More: Uncovering Eva Clark's Rightful Legacy," *Bandwagon: The Journal of the Circus Historical Society*, Vol. 64, No. 3, 2020, p. 36. Norris cites in her endnote #32 the following: "Roster of McFadden's Amusement Enterprise and Pavilion Shows." *New York Clipper*, 11 May, 1889, p.138. Norris further cites in endnote #33: "Under the White Tents." *New York Clipper*, 7 September, 1889, p.427.

(C) Aine Murphy Norris, "Lore No More: Uncovering Eva Clark's Rightful Legacy," *Bandwagon: The Journal of the Circus Historical Society*, Vol. 64, No. 3, 2020, p. 36. Norris cites in her endnote #39, the following: "Notes from Price's Floating Opera." *New York Clipper*, 30 December, 1893, p. 688. In endnote #41 Norris further cites: "Notes from Price's Floating Opera." *New York Clipper*, 6 January, 1894, p. 711.

(D) Aine Murphy Norris, "Lore No More: Uncovering Eva Clark's Rightful Legacy," *Bandwagon: The Journal of the Circus Historical Society*, Vol. 64, No. 3, 2020, p.36. Norris cites "Notes from W. C. Clark Shows." Classic.circushistory.org. N. p., 2020. Web.

(E) Aine Murphy Norris, "Lore No More: Uncovering Eva Clark's Rightful Legacy," *Bandwagon: The Journal of the Circus Historical Society*, Vol. 64, No. 3, 2020, p.36. A photograph of the marriage license appears on the same page.

(F) Aine Murphy Norris, "Lore No More: Uncovering Eva Clark's Rightful Legacy," *Bandwagon: The Journal of the Circus Historical Society*, Vol. 64, No. 3, 2020, p.40.

(G) Aine Murphy Norris, "Lore No More: Uncovering Eva Clark's Rightful Legacy," *Bandwagon: The Journal of the Circus Historical Society*, Vol. 64, No. 3, 2020, pp. 44-45. The second part of Norris' article focuses on Lum Clark and what became of him. Many assumed he disappeared following Eva Clark's death, but, in fact, he lived to rejoin his family, marry and have a family, and remained a part of circus life for a good many years.

Xariffa in Augusta: Travel Letters of Mary Ashley Townsend, 1871

Edited by William J. Miller

Editor's Note: *Churchville historian Bill Miller once again uses his history sleuthing skills to bring us the fascinating story of a nineteenth-century socialite and author whose literary wanderings brought her into Augusta County.*

On a scorching July afternoon in 1871, the steamship Creole, pushed its way northward across Lake Pontchartrain from New Orleans. On deck stood one of the more widely read poets in the South. Nearing forty years of age, she was witty, popular, and wealthy and, with her husband, three daughters and a few friends, was bound away for an extended vacation. Her name was Mary Ashley Townsend, and her destination was Augusta County, Virginia.¹

In her youth, she had been Mary Ashley Van Voorhis, New York born but Louisiana raised. She had married a fellow New Yorker, financier Gideon Townsend, and started a family. The New Orleans Picayune, her hometown newspaper, published many of her travel articles and poems, which were well received by the public and reprinted in newspapers across the country. Under the pen name "Xariffa" she published books of poems and many travel articles, and her renown grew. By the 1880s she would be called – unofficially – the Poet Laureate of Louisiana.

In the summer of 1871, wishing to escape the heat of New Orleans, Townsend set her eye on the Shenandoah Valley. She agreed to document her trip in a series of letters to the Picayune, and the newspaper printed eight long letters from her between July and November. Most of these letters were reprinted in the Staunton Spectator. The six letters presented here, in whole or in part, relate Xariffa's adventures in and near Augusta County. She made a side trip to White Sulphur Springs, but during most of her sojourn in the Valley her base was the resort hotel at Stribling Springs northwest of Staunton. She hiked in the hills, endured bone-jarring travel over the local roads, visited camp meetings, rode in locomotives through tunnels and over mountains, and wondered at "Weyer's Cave." Through her good-natured letters to "Dear Pic" – short for Picayune – Xariffa presents a vivid perspective on nineteenth-century life in the Valley and in rural Augusta in particular.

The journey from Louisiana to the Blue Ridge lasted a week and required passage on half a dozen railroads across five states and more than a thousand miles before

TUESDAY MORNING, JULY 11, 1871.

Our esteemed occasional contributor, "Xariffa," left last evening for Stripling Springs, a delightful watering place, pleasantly located in the vicinity of Staunton, Va., where he will pass several weeks, and then proceed on her journey further North. We wish the gifted lady, who, during her absence will be missed by a large circle of friends, a pleasant trip, and trust that she and her trio of lovely daughters will, on their return, be greatly improved in health.

Xariffa's New Orleans editor bade her a public bon voyage . . . and misspelled her destination. The Times-Picayune (New Orleans, Louisiana), July 11, 1871, p. 4, col. 1.)



A portrait of Mary Ashley Townsend from an undated photograph. (Willard & Livermore Woman of the Century, 1893)

she and her party arrived Charlottesville, Virginia, in mid-July. In her first letter, only a fragment of which was published in the Spectator, Xariffa tells of riding the rails across the Blue Ridge.

* * *

At Charlottesville we left the Southern mail route and took seats on the left-hand side, that is the South side of the train, on the Chesapeake and Ohio Railroad, for Staunton. The ride from Charlottesville to Staunton, a distance of thirty-six miles, seemed to us the most delightful on the route. Soon after starting we passed the University, once more making a mental bow to its dome, and then tobacco patches began to interest us, and then whispers of "the tunnel, the tunnel." The conductor came in and lighted a lamp—and very soon we entered Greenwood Tunnel, certainly a short one, the Kelley's, certainly a shorter one, but soon after the Blue Ridge Tunnel, which is said to be seven-eighths of a mile in length.² Between Greenwood and Blue Ridge the scenery is magnificent, though somewhat appalling to a flat land dweller. Our train flew up that mountain side with the grace of a bird and we looked down the dizzy heights [sic] to where in the valley lay the county of Nelson and beyond to where the Blue Ridge range climbed the realms of air, almost holding our breaths. The grading on this part of the road is sixty feet to the mile. As we emerged from the long tunnel we came upon the town of Waynesboro, where Early had his last fight with Sheridan and was defeated.³ We looked at the little stream meandering here, a branch, I believe,



Renowned artist Edward Beyer documented his journey through Virginia with a series of paintings, including at several in Augusta County. His view of Stribling Springs, dated 1858, looks northward and shows the grounds much as Xariffa described them in 1871. A stage coach enters the property from the Warm Springs Turnpike in the foreground. The three-story main hotel and the ranges of cottages stand around the promenade. A domed gazebo marks the location of one spring in the middle distance and a bathhouse stands above another spring on the far right. (Album of Virginia or Illustration of the Old Dominion by Edward Beyer, 1858)

of the south fork of the Shenandoah and thought what dismal scenes had been enacted on its now peaceful banks. A heavy shower ushered us into Staunton, where, while a stage is preparing to convey us to Stribling Springs, thirteen miles distant, I mail to you these hasty and disjointed pages. We have traveled day and night, are wretchedly weary and disgracefully dusty. We leave the railroad without regret, though I must say the conductors upon the whole route from Manchac⁴ to this point have been invariably kind and courteous, ever attentive and ready to give any information. The rain prevents even a house-top view of Staunton; but I shall return to it one of these pleasant days to visit its many fine institutions. The trunks are lashed on—the driver shouts all aboard! Adieu, very faithfully, Xariffa.⁵

* * *

Stribling Springs, Va., July, 1871. Dear Pic — We left Staunton in an old-fashioned Virginia stagecoach. It was an ancient and venerable vehicle, with yellow body and yellow wheels, and wonderfully capacious. It was drawn by four gallant studs—a white and a bay for wheel horses, a bay and a white for leaders—and driven by a colored gentleman who had much more humanity for his four horses than for his six passengers. The stage was

an interesting relic of those old times before locomotives learned to crawl up mountains and slide down hills, and before Virginia aristocracy took to riding on a rail. For some distance our party amused themselves by inventing incidents that might have been connected with the old stage—the matches that might have been made in it, the hearts that might have been broken in it, the tears it had witnessed, the hopes, the smiles, the fears. After we had been on our way a half hour, we all made up our minds our own hearts would be broken in it and our backs also before we reached Stribling; for a more uncompromising vehicle, with stones and ruts and jolts generally, never was contrived. The distance from Staunton to Stribling is thirteen miles, and winds through a fine agricultural district. Picturesque scenery abounds, and the shower which had so recently fallen had brightened hill and valley with a refreshing bath, and they lay before us in the afternoon sunlight in renewed beauty. About four miles from Staunton we stopped at what is known as the War Spring, a very fine water, cool and very clear, which benevolently gushes from under a bank by the roadside, offering the cup of cold water to any passer-by. It is said no spring was known here, until the day of the heavy cannonading at Manassas, when it burst out and has never since been dry.⁶ Late rains had raised the streams, and, we crossed several small “forks” or “branches,” which here form the head waters of the Shenandoah River which, after traversing the famous Shenandoah Valley, empties [in] the Potomac, at Harper’s Ferry; Middle River we forded, the water being up to the horses’ bodies, and, like all the other streams we had seen, even

STIBLING SPRINGS.—This well known and pleasant watering place in this County, is now open for the reception of virtues under the management of the popular and gentlemanly Proprietor, Chesley Kinney, Esq. At this Summer resort, visitors have combined in a high degree the advantages of the medicinal visitors of Alum, Sulphur and Chalybeate waters, with most pleasant accommodations. It is a beautiful place and eminently suited for those who wish to have families spend the Summer months where the advantages of health, pleasure, recreation, and amusement can be enjoyed in an eminent degree.

We are pleased to see that long trains filled with passengers on their way to the mineral springs in the mountains, are now passing here daily. We hope that each of the springs will make a good season.

This advertisement ran in the June 20, 1871, Staunton Spectator about a month before Xariffa and her party set off from New Orleans. A second advertisement corrected the unfortunate typesetter’s error in the third line and clarified that the spa was open for “visitors” not “virtues.”

The springs resorts in Augusta and Bath Counties attracted large annual business from all over the reunited states. This item appears in the Staunton Spectator, July 18, 1871, not long before Xariffa and her party arrived.



A section from Jed Hotchkiss's war-time Map of the Shenandoah Valley (1862-1865), shows the location of some of the landmarks mentioned by Xariffa in 1871. From Stribling Springs (upper left) she traveled to Churchville by way of Jennings's Gap and returned to the resort by moving northward from the village, across Jennings's Branch, past the decaying mansion on the Evans property, and then across Elk Run and through Moffet's Gap south of Buck Hill. (Library of Congress).

more muddy than the Mississippi. If "blood be thicker than water" in that vicinity, then it is thick, indeed. Wading in Middle River were two fishermen; one whipping the water with a rod, the other following with a net which he frequently "hauled," only to find it empty.—They berated our driver roundly for driving through the river just in time to spoil their sport, and as far as we could look back at them they were still whipping and hauling, but never with any net profits. As the sun began to sink, the weary days of car travel and the bad state of the stage road began to tell upon the spirits of our party, and conversation gradually flagged, while restless movements and weary sighs betokened a growing impatience to reach our journey's end. Only one miserable attempt was made to arouse the former spirit of fun and vivacity which had existed among us.

Two forlorn gray geese were seen in the twilight, sitting some distance from each other among the grass and herbs at the roadside.—Some one pointed them out, remarking, "They look like widows, do they not?" "Yes," replied Blondina⁷ from the shadows of the back seat; "at least they are in weeds." After this diabolical effort, silence once more reigned: the twilight deepened, everything became spectral. There were ghosts of gray houses

Railroads.

CHESAPEAKE & O. R. R.—On and after Thursday, June 1st, Passenger Trains leave Richmond (Sunday excepted) as follows:

8.30 A. M.—MAIL TRAIN for the White Sulphur Springs, connecting at Gordonsville with the Orange, Alexandria and Manassas train for Washington and North, and Lynchburg and South.

3.35 P. M.—Accommodation Train for Gordonsville.

On and after the 15th of June a Passenger Train will run daily (except Sunday) between Staunton and the White Sulphur, as follows:

Leave Staunton at.....	8 15 A. M.
Arrive at White Sulphur at.....	3 32 P. M.
Leave White Sulphur at.....	2 35 P. M.
Arrive at Staunton at.....	7 41 P. M.

Through tickets at low rates, sold to all points Northwest and Southwest.

Further information may be obtained at the company's office.

No Passenger Trains are run on Sundays.

A. H. PERRY,
General Superintendent.

JAMES F. NETHERLAND, Gen'l Ticket Agent.

The duration of the seventy-two-mile train ride through the mountains from Staunton to White Sulphur Springs was billed as five hours and seventeen minutes, or an average speed of about fourteen miles per hour. Staunton Spectator, August 8, 1871.

with not a lamp to vitalize them; shadowy trees that bent down and shook their heads at us; streams that looked like wreaths of smoke blown from the nostrils of unseen giants; spectral mills whose wheels were held motion less by the invisible fingers of Darkness and rocks that rose like solid ramparts from the ground at our feet, then mysteriously vanished in impenetrable forests. Up hill, down hill, rattling over stones and dry water courses; suddenly the hoofs of our poor horses on a bridge; a white gate to our right, into which we turn. An encouraging crack of the driver's whip, an accelerated trot on the part of our beasts and we are rolling up the carriage sweep toward Mr. Kinney's hotel at Stribling.⁸ We were glad enough to exchange our stage springs for Stribling Springs, and it was pleasant as we alighted to feel our hands grasped in welcome and to hear the hearty voice of Cousin George, saying "Here you are!" to each one as we appeared.

Night, however, is the most dismal of all times at which the weary traveler reaches his destination. Little discomforts then swell into gigantic evils, petty annoyances into tremendous trials, and the very quintessence of home sickness settles down upon his heart as he strives to resign himself to the

Livery.

A MERICAN HOTEL.
Livery Stables.
STAUNTON, VA.

JOHN O'TOOLE,.....Proprietor.

My stables are constantly supplied with elegant horses, carriages, buggies, hacks, &c., which will be furnished to my patrons on most reasonable terms. Also good and reliable drivers supplied if desired. I can furnish livery equal, if not superior, to that of any other stable in the State. Give me a trial and I will guarantee satisfaction.

JOHN O'TOOLE.

de20-tf

From the C & O Railroad depot, John O'Toole's stagecoaches carried mail and passengers over regular routes outside of Staunton. Staunton Spectator, December 12, 1871.

unfamiliar desolation of strange surroundings. The morning in this instance swept all such cobwebs away. We found ourselves in a "cool, green valley," shut in by lofty mountains. The lawn in front of the house, besides the carriage drive is laid out in winding walks and interspersed with beautiful trees. The locust, the oak and the weeping willow furnish shade for the croquet ground, and picturesque bridges span the little streams that carry away the surplus water of the springs. The springs in the immediate vicinity of the hotel are six in number — three of these are alum, two are chalybeate, and one is sulphur. The latter is sheltered by a little pagoda of its own, which has a very pleasing effect in the picture, its round zinc roof looked down upon from the hills, having the appearance of a little lake nestled among the trees.

The hotel is a "long, low, suspicious looking craft" — three stories high, but with very low ceilings. The lower story, or basement, contains the office and dining room, the second the ballroom and parlor and ten sleeping apartments, the third the housekeepers' quarters and eight bedrooms. It is a quaint old house, with deep window seats, old fashioned fireplaces and wainscots; and only needs a ghost to make it delightfully interesting. It is built of brick and was erected in 1815 by the father of the present of the present Dr. Stribling of Staunton, Va.⁹ The main building on either side is flanked by a terrace, on which stands, as if on dress parade, a row of neat and very picturesque little cottages. Crossing yonder bridge, and turning to the left up the well-kept walk, you climb the eminence upon which stands the private residence of the proprietor, whose noble, beautiful daughter is unanimously acknowledged to be the belle of the place. From this point a lovely landscape lies before you. and all about there is an air of peace and quiet which wraps the scene up as in a sacred garment. There is a ten-pin alley and a billiard saloon on the grounds, and pleasant drives in every direction.

Within pleasant walking distance of the hotel is a magnesia spring and two more chalybeate springs, while for ordinary use there is an abundance

Saturday I drove out to Stribling's, which is a pretty little place hid in the mountains, and just a pleasant from Staunton. About half the people this place are there. I counted as as twenty-nine members of one fam There are also a number of persons Richmond. Mrs. Yarbrough, Mrs. eux, and others are of the number. not what one would call a fashionable , and is far from being gay, though are about seventy-five visitors, and umber increasing.

During Xariffa's stay at Stribling's, another guest, a newspaper correspondent, gave the resort what might be called a mixed review. Richmond Dispatch, August 9, 1871, p. 3, col. 3.

of freestone water brought down to the house from a spring on the opposite mountain. This is said to be wonderfully productive of beautiful complexions. The table is supplied with an abundance of pure milk and delicious butter, venison, mutton, beef and vegetables. Chickens are less plentiful, but are very nice when we do get them; the servants are all polite and attentive, the table and bed linen scrupulously clean, and every officer about the establishment is gentlemanly and regardful of the guests' comfort and happiness. We deem it a sort of an Eden among watering places—but, of course, it has its grumblers, as such places ever must have. There is always a certain class of people who never get "anything to eat," or "nothing good to eat," or find everything cooked in such a manner "it isn't fit to eat." In the verb "to eat" they live, move and have their being; but even these, it seems to me, might be satisfied at Stribling. —Goethe says "there are problematical characters who are not equal to any situation in life, and whom no situation satisfies. This causes an immense discord within, and their whole life is without enjoyment." I wonder if Goethe was not at some hotel or boarding house when he wrote that sentence?¹⁰

The number of guests at present is not very large, but many more are expected in August when, I suppose, the spring opens! In these mountain regions I have lost all track of the seasons. All last week winter clothing and good fires were necessary, and the mercury for several mornings turned a decidedly cold shoulder upon us, standing at 45°! Among the guests here is the handsome and accomplished Mrs. K, of Washington, with her young son and lovely daughter; "York," of Richmond, a gentleman of fine legal attainments and brilliant oratorical powers, who is also a well-known and witty correspondent of the Southern press; while New Orleans is represented by no less than four families, among whom is the elegant Mrs. S. H. W., and her only son, so long and well known in Crescent City circles. As for young ladies, I imagine there is no lovelier group of girlish faces than is brought together here every day and evening on the croquet ground and in the ball room. A few days since a party of us made the ascent of Hankey Mountain, one of the highest peaks in the immediate vicinity of the hotel. Cousin George and the senior partner¹¹ had been up the day before, and had come down upon us all at dinner time, with their straw hats and shoulders decorated with wild vines and each playing upon a chestnut whistle as they paraded for a few moments with great dignity, up and down the gallery in front of the dining room doors! They looked so much like blood relations of the god Pan, that we instinctively looked for the goat hoofs, and made haste to offer

them honey and milk; upon which delectable diet it is asserted this deity was wont to thrive. But -- "tell it not in Gath, publish it not in the streets of Askalon"¹² -- they preferred a substantial dinner of beef and cabbage! It may have been the beauty of their appearance, or it may have been the sublime strains of their chestnut whistles that allured us but at all events, next morning ten of us, each armed with a stout staff and shod with heavy shoes, began the same ascent. Our path led through thick woods of pine, oak, maple and chestnut, while luxuriant vines of wild clematis, convolvulus and the wild grape, were to be seen in profusion. Wintergreens and sassafras were abundant, and whortleberries grew so plentifully on either side of the way that we broke off handfuls of the bushes and literally went browsing all the way up the mountain. We passed on our way, in a very solitary spot, a Confederate graveyard. Many of the bodies had been removed, and the empty graves yawned under the shadows as if waiting for new occupants.¹³ In fact, we find reminders of the war about us here on every hand. When we reached the summit of the mountain, a lovely view repaid us for our toilsome march, and as we stood gazing upon it, we congratulated ourselves upon having been turned by fate into these pastures of beauty and rest. The picturesque meets one at every turn, and all the artist is aroused in one's nature. One feels "foregrounds," "middle distances" and "perspective" growing naturally from his finger ends, and his soul grows from mere association with nature's grandeur. After all, is it not better to be an artist than a poet? All the world loves pictures—one-sixteenth of it loves poetry. Is it not better to please all the world than a mere fractional portion of it?

We began our rugged descent after an hour's contemplation of the view, and reached home with the young minister's hat glorified by verdant trophies, while Blondina was half hidden under specimens of every sort gathered during the excursion, and "Blake" and "Bell" and "Daisy" and "Adele" looked much more like wood nymphs and genies of the forest than every day mortals.¹⁴ Our next excursion is to be to the famous Cyclopean Towers, only six miles from this place. As ever, Xariffa.¹⁵

* * *

Stribling Springs, Aug., 1871. Dear Pic.: This morning drove out with Mr. Kinney to view the remains of some fortifications once crowning hill about three miles from this place. We drove westward on the Warm Spring Turnpike, on either side of which in May, 1862 Gen. Jackson's army lay encamped, its right resting in the woods up this pike, its left at Stribling Springs.¹⁶ They still preserve at the hotel the cup from which Stonewall Jackson drank



Although the Cyclopean Towers, known today as Natural Chimneys, are mentioned as the site for an excursion, the letter actually describing the visit is not included in this narrative. This image is from Jed Hotchkiss's 1885 atlas of Augusta County.

of the mineral waters during his brief stay there. Our drive was lovely one, the road being in fine order, and shaded on either side by well-timbered hills, in whose shadowy depths the clearing of the woodman's ax, the dreamy caw of the crow, and the whimper of countless leaves made summer-morn music. Suddenly, upon our left, just at the junction of the Warm Spring Turnpike and the Staunton road, commanding for some distance the highway on three sides, rose the once fortified hill. Its breastworks have crumbled now, and those that remain are almost hidden in the thick growth of underbrush, which also conceals the abattis work at the foot of the hill. Nature has been very busy here, effacing the disfiguring marks of war so skillfully that it is only with an effort that the passer-by discovers that they ever existed. Does she not teach us noble lesson here, where she yielded up her grand trees, many of them the growth of centuries, to the ax of the spoiler; here, where her fair and delicate flowers, the passion-poems of her heart, fell crushed under the grinding wheel of the artillery wagon, where the sap of her forests ran waste and her soil was robbed of its increase, what does she do? Does she lie in her sackcloth and ashes and mourn? Does she expend her remaining strength in idle threats of vengeance yet to come? Does she cuddle her own weakness in impotent regrets and vain hatred And, because conquered, does she continue humbly to bite the dust beneath the heel of the conqueror? Nay! She remembers there is yet strength in her own might; she rebuilds, she reblooms, and while the rattle of musketry and the thunder of cannon seem yet echoing among her hills she sponges away the blood from her plains, she conceals the scars of the axe upon her forests, and though the wound in her great heart be not healed, she bears it so proudly and smile above it so grandly that they who smote her dare not breathe taunt.

Turning abruptly off to the left around the base of the height, we en-

tered Jennings' Gap and drove down the Staunton road on the south side of the same mountain, which, my friend Mr. Kinney stated, was fortified by the force under Major Howard, Gen. A. P. Hill's engineer.¹⁷ The next object of interest was a low one story house, once a very ordinary wayside inn for the accommodation of travellers in the stage coaches on this route, but now converted by time into an artistic ruin, its roof thickly overgrown with moss, its windows shattered and its timbers crumbling. Even the road had taken new course, and instead of passing at the front, now ran by the back door, so that it seemed as if the old house, in its age and ruin and neglect, turned its back upon the world and hid its face! Peaceful farms lay on either side of us, and in one door a woman stood spinning, the hum of her wheel blending sweetly with the gurgle of brooks and the song of birds. Through the open door of another cottage quilting party sat at work, the rosy cheek country lasses looking out at us as we passed, while the more sober dames, in dignified indifference snapped the chalk line or continued to ply the glittering needle. Still further on threshing machine was buzzing in the field, the sweet odored grain scenting the air as it cast off its cloak of chaff and fell in marketable heaps upon the barn floor, all making it hard to realize that "grim visaged war" had ever trod these sunny vales.

We passed the residence of Bishop Glossbrenner, a pretty spot, commanding an extensive and beautiful view, and then lofty house upon a lofty hill, which has its own romantic history, too long for these pages.¹⁸ Then Churchville, pretty little hamlet, which has three churches already, and is about to build another—"a new departure," from which fact might we not infer that sacred societies have their dissensions and divisions in about the same ratio as profane ones? Turning down the stony village street, past the parsonages and the store, and the churches, and the house from whose windows¹⁹ three lovely young girlish faces peeped out at us, we reached stream, which we forded, after watering our horses therein, and then we reached Loch Willow. Isn't that pretty name? The bank of stream, which at certain seasons swells to lake, are fringed with pollard willows, and the glancing water, the old mill, the quaint houses of the hamlet, form a charming rural picture. The dwellings all over the country have their chimneys of stone or brick built on the outside of the houses. It would seem as if the people were hospitable to all except their own chimneys, which they persistently turn out of doors. In ruinous buildings I think the effect is quaint and pretty; but in the new ones it is simply abominable.

After leaving Loch Willow, we could distinctly see Elliot's Knob, said



The village of Churchville, from Jed Hotchkiss's 1885 atlas of Augusta County.

to be the highest peak in the Alleghanies, even exceeding in height the Peaks of Otter, which maybe higher mountains in direct ascent from the plain, but are not so high above the level of the sea.²⁰ Passing over hill we stopped to gather some scarlet creepers, which were glorifying a farmhouse by the roadside, shaking their flaming bells from the peaks of the gable, hiding behind the old stone chimney, capering over the roof and dropping pendulous below the mossy eaves. It was the first vine of the kind had ever seen since entered the State, verifying the old proverb that "a prophet is best known out of his own country," for I had seen the Virginia creeper in nearly every part of the Union except Virginia. A large brick house little further on attracted my attention from its air of distinction, its size and modern style of architecture. It had formerly belonged to Mr. Cochran, a name well known in all this part of the country.²¹ It was sold during the war "the house and all the lands pertaining thereto" for about \$18,000 Confederate currency. The purchaser had never occupied it, and thus left to the wind and weather, to the dampness and mildew, the whole of one side of the building had fallen out, as if the loneliness and desolation so long imprisoned there had "broken jail," and fled forever away. We could look from our carriage into what seemed to have been an elegant drawing-room, with its oaken doors which nobody opened, its silent floors which nobody crossed, its spacious void where nobody spoke.

As Jennings' Gap fell back in the distance, we drove slowly over the intervening hills until we once more struck our homeward path, and upon descending into "Moffett's Gap," in which Stribling Springs are located, the air which had been almost oppressively warm, suddenly became cool, and

a strong draft became apparent, as if we were driving through a funnel, a peculiarity common to these mountain passes.²² Now, as we are assured that

“A little nonsense now and then,
Is cherished by the wisest men,”

“suppose” I give you conundrum: Why are these Virginia mountains like sick chickens? Because they have “the gap(e)s.”

We reached home just in time for dinner, having driven about fifteen miles, and found our scarlet creepers instantly seized upon by a fair one with golden locks, who met us smiling on the threshold. Sincerely, Xariffa.²³

* * *

Stribling Springs, Augusta County, Va., August, 1871. Tell me, dear friend, did you ever take a straw ride? No? Then may the future have in store for you the jolly experience. For him who can ride in his carriage every day it has all the charm of novelty; for him who keeps his horses in his own two shoes, and rarely drives any other pair, it also has its attractions. A camp meeting is being held about two miles from this place, by a sect called The United Brethren, and a party of us begged the privilege of being sent to it in the farm wagon. At 5 o'clock, P. M., the conveyance was at the door, its base filled with fresh sweet hay, a single board lying across it in front for the driver's accommodation. Our numbers here have recently been augmented by the arrival from New York of the first President of your first city railroad, with his wife and two. Young daughters, both of the latter noted belles of Gotham. Into the wagon we gathered them all, with the exception of F. P., to whom was assigned a seat in another carriage. The senior partner took the base and assumed the whip and reins. A dignified gentleman from Washington, after a moment's hesitation, sprung up to the seat at his side; into the spare spots we tucked some little girls and boys, while a well-known member of an F. F. V. swung himself up on the end-board behind, and away we went.²⁴ How many feet long that wagon was on the outside I have not heard; but that there were at least twenty-four feet inside I know by numeral measurement. The rattle of the springless wagon, which the driver took pains to carry over all the stones, the merry laughter of the gay girls and the shouts of the children awakened the echoes as we jolted away. The member of the F. F. V. pelted the children with French bonbons, or tossed to the girls gayly colored sugar apples, which never proved to be apples of discord. Whenever we came to a particularly bad bit of road, our impromptu driver took particular pains to “whip up,” when, with our chignons dancing a regular Virginia “break-down,” and amid an iron hail of hair pins, and forced to keep from

CAMP MEETINGS.—The first camp meeting for Shenandoah Valley District, Virginia Annual Conference of the United Brethren in Christ, will be held near Mohler's Cave, Augusta county, commencing August 4th, 1871.

The second will be held on the old grounds near Stribling Springs, Augusta county, commencing August 18th. The third will be held on the old ground near Singer's Glenn, Rockingham county, commencing August 25th. The fourth will be held near Grove Hill, Page county, commencing Sept. 1st.

Bishop Weaver of Baltimore, Md., is expected to attend the second or Stribling Springs' meeting.

J. L. GRIMM,

By order of J. W. HOWE, P. E.

An advertisement in the Staunton Spectator of July 18, 1871, aimed to attract visitors to the neighborhood of Stribling Springs for the same mid-August Camp Meeting that appealed so much to Xariffa.

speaking lest we should bite our precious tongues, we would rush down hill and bounce over the inevitable "chuck-hole" at the bottom, only to go laughing and talking more gayly than ever up the next ascent. We passed an old log school-house, its broken windows a begging for a glazier, and its ill-hung door clinging to a post in a manner which seemed to indicate it had been dining out. During the days of secession it had been the scene of many a warm political debate; and could its rough-hewn walls but speak, what items of interest might they not add to the history of the lost cause.

We reached a fine grove of oak and chestnut trees, and knew by sundry sights and sounds we had reached the camp ground. "Here's the place to buy your candy—only twenty-five cents a yard!" "Here's your live rattlesnake; walk up, gentlemen and ladies, and take a look at him!" "Melons here, almost given away!" were some of the cries that saluted our ears; while gay booths, displaying the flimsiest and gaudiest decorated fronts, and nearly every popular and familiar advertisement, except "Buy your shirts at S. N. Moody's," met our eyes. On one tree was nailed a flaming circus poster; on another a blacksmith stated he was prepared to shoe all beasts at the rate of one dollar and twenty-five cents full set. The odor of strong cheese and stewed chicken, of ham and onions, of pastry and perspiration pervaded the place. Upon a horse sat a young country girl, eating what is known as a "hunk of gingerbread," while behind her, on the same animal, her freckle-faced lover regaled himself upon watermelon. The girls decided to purchase some candy, and the young man in the booth at which they stopped offered as an excuse for the awkwardness he displayed in tying it up in an old newspaper, that his partner, who usually attended to this part of the business, happened to be absent. A partner! and really the whole stock in trade could not have been worth more than two dollars and a half!

Passing the last booth, we came upon a plot of ground enclosed on

three sides by rude wooden tents; the row fronting us as we approached intersected by the pulpit, a rough, wooden platform with a rough covering overhead. Under the trees rows of wooden benches were prepared for the congregation, and the altar was fenced in by unhewn rails resting upon stakes and bound together by strips of bark at the corners. Near the front the ground was strewn with straw for the benefit of the "mourners"—those moved with the spirit of the revival, who go forward to be prayed for. The people were just getting settled in their tents, and old and young, little babies and feeble invalids had left their homes and gathered here in the most earnest and cheerful spirit to enjoy the annual meeting. We were invited into the tent of Widow Whitmer, a thorough specimen of an old country lady, her head covered with a clean white cap, the broad ruffle of which shaded her aged face; her breast covered with a snowy handkerchief, pinned neatly across the front of her plain calico dress, and a clay pipe, which she smoked slowly, held between her lips, I asked her how many occupied her tent: "We are eleven," this year, she said. "Eleven," I repeated, looking around the ten by twelve cabin. "How in the world do you all sleep?" "Oh, very nicely; the young women sleep up stairs and we old women down stairs." The "up stairs" was a sort of shelf swung up just under the ridge-pole, something like the upper berth in a sleeping car, and the "down stairs" was another bed directly under the upper one and of the same kind. The "men folks," she said all slept in the wagons. We were hospitably urged to "sit by and take a bite" at her well filled tea table, spread just outside of the tent door, but not being hungry were forced to decline. The very perfection of neatness was visible in tent and table, and indeed, the snugness and order in all the cabins reminded me of house-keeping I have witnessed among officers and men aboard ships.

A horn lustily blown nearby startled us all, but our friend, the widow, told us it was "the bell for evenin' meeting'," and we at once proceeded to the altar and took seats. Huge boxes of earth placed upon tripods of rough wood stood at regular distances through the grounds, and upon these immense fires of pine wood were kindled, lighting up the scene with a weird and wonderful brilliancy, converting the chestnuts and oaks into tall Corinthian capitals, which seemed to support the dome of heaven with its frescoes of shining stars. The service opened with prayer and the singing of simple hymns by the whole congregation; prayer again, and a sermon plain and direct, and admirably adapted to the understanding of the hearers. At the close of the services we found our way once more to our wagon, saw the F. P. and the ladies he had escorted safely in their carriage, and then discovered it was so dark we could scarcely see the road. The senior partner, for

once not daring to trust his own eyes, tried to hire a driver, but could find no one willing to forego the commercial end of the camp meeting, therefore he was obliged to mount the box again himself, while the representative of the F. F. V.'s, with his usual gallantry and good nature, secured a lantern and walked ahead until he had led us safely through the "tall timber" and out of the woods. Then he resumed his place in the wagon, and broke out anew with sugar plums, and told stories, and played "hullgull"²⁵ with the children, keeping everybody around him lively with his merriment, until a shout from the front announced to us that the F. P.'s carriage was obliged to halt for repairs. The lantern was again brought into requisition, the broken harness "tinkered up," and we reached home without further accident, all singing as we jolted on our homeward way.

The next morning we took a carriage and rode over again. This time we each paid ten cents, the sum required, and took a look at the rattle-snake. The owner had caught it two days before, on Shenandoah mountain, by converting his shoe-string into a slip noose and fastening it to a pole, and then adroitly throwing the knot over the reptile's head. It had twelve rattles and a button, was four feet long and four inches around the largest part of the body. It was secured in a box which was covered with wire. It made me shudder to look at it. I have a constitutional aversion to snakes. Verily, had I been Eve, the tempter must have come in some other guise than that of a serpent to have lured me from Paradise. We found more wagons, more booths, more horses, more people than the day before, and after remaining to morning service returned home again. The next day was Sunday, and we went again. In fact, I began to be regarded as a United Brother! On this day, we found the woods crowded with every imaginable sort of vehicle, and the camp ground peopled with every variety of the genus homo. After listening to morning prayer, a Sunday school address and an afternoon sermon on the whites' side, we passed to the opposite side of the pulpit to hear the negro sermon. The congregation there gathered together was odd indeed, and, like its white neighbor, displayed every variety of head-gear and costume that has been in vogue since the days of our grandmothers to the present time. I lost the minister's text, but he told his hearers he knew they came there for Holy Ghost religion; but they must look out that the fire in their hearts was not fox-fire, and, moreover, they must strive to be washed in the soapsuds of religion and be made clean in the lather of salvation! He had been left an orphan very young, and he had had a hard master. Did they know who was his master? No? Well, it was de debbil; but now, thank God, he had got shed uv him, and stood a free man

afore um all. But adieu. My candle is out. I have written you the last page by the light of parlor matches, and from the silence that reigns throughout the house I know I am writing somewhere among the “we sma’ hours ayant the twal.” Xariffa.²⁶

* * *

White Sulphur Springs, Va., Sept., 1871.²⁷ Up in the morning at half past 3, a laughing, shivering, light-hearted party at Stribling. We wait for the wagon, which is literally a slow coach. The servants on this occasion, “sent into this breathing world but half made up,” run about half dressed, with lanterns, which wink as if the darkness hurt their eyes. No time for breakfast, though Jordan, the steward, dragging his suspenders over his shoulders, runs down stairs barefooted to hospitably insist on getting us “up something;” no time for the fruit which David and Ellen beg us to find room for in our satchels; no time for any of the biscuits which the kind hearted housekeeper assures us would “be nice;” no time for anything save the glass of wine which Mr. Cushing declares we must swallow in order to keep up good spirits to Staunton. Up drives the stage. Four horses. O’Toole himself on the box.²⁸ We hurry in; we hurry off —out of the gate, over the bridge—the cold moon in the cold sky looking wistfully down at us as if she would like to borrow a shawl! I think for a moment of two little golden heads left asleep on one pillow. I remember in what kind hands they are left. I breathe for them an earnest prayer and give myself up to the glories of the drive. Half way to Staunton! We remind our friend O’Toole that the train starts at 8—that nature is asserting herself—that we are unmistakably hungry. He touches his hat politely, smiles gallantly, and mutters between his teeth:—“Are their breakfasts of more importance than my horses?” The sun rises—the sun rides high. We reach Staunton just in time not to eat the breakfast we have ordered, and off we go on the early train.

What a ride. “Look here! look there!” we cry to each other as we dart through tunnels, sink into valleys, soar over mountains, skim along by water courses, past cascades, past caves, through vast halls of hewn stone, past Clifton Forge, thundering over bridges, gliding across trestle work, plunging into the wilderness and looking out of the rear door at the long stretch of smooth track, which looks like a steel-gray ribbon binding together the wild tresses of the forest. —We halt. Mr. Woodward, the conductor, comes to say to me that we have taken to ourselves another engine, two being required to pull us up the grade. Would I like to ride upon it? I turn inquiringly to him whom I have promised to “obey,” receive a smiling affirmative nod, and in



Xariffa and her party spent part of September 1871 at White Sulphur Springs in Greenbrier County, portrayed here by Beyer in 1858. (Album of Virginia or Illustration of the Old Dominion by Edward Beyer, 1858)

a moment more am assisted to the left hand of Mr. Alley, the engineer, who places me by an open sash that commands a view of the whole peril ahead, or at least that which seems to be peril. We start; a straining pull, a reluctant revolution of the wheels, and slowly we begin the ascent. The grade here is three hundred and six feet to the mile, and so rough is the road, I can scarcely keep my footing as I stand, a sort of figure head, in a round hat and a red shawl, on the locomotive. I look back, and in the doorway of the first car I see Mr. S.²⁹ and his dear little wife, the senior partner, the three girls and the young doctor, standing grouped together on the narrow platform, each face differently expressive of the awe and wonder which the surrounding scenes excite. The engine sobs and sobs as it pants up the mountain. We are above the tallest tree tops. We look hundreds of feet down into rocky gorges. Sob, sob—there seems to be some mighty giant imprisoned in the engine, whose ponderous heart beats I listen to, as throbbing, throbbing, it toils upward with us, fed all the way upon fire and water, and regaled continually with oil. I wonder how many forest trees it has eaten, and how many small brooks it has swallowed, and how much oil it has anointed its joints with, just to climb that hill, and as I wonder we reach the summit and stop. I am lifted down and run back to take my seat in the train, and as I do so, the extra engine uncouples and glides away from us, passing out of sight around the curve as we slowly take the down grade. I find myself oscillating like a pendulum between the right and left side of the coach, as the beauty of the

scenery changes from that to this. In a little time Mr. Woodward comes to me again, to grant me the rare passenger privilege of riding on the engine—Again I run forward—again we have two engines—again I am assisted to the engineer's side—a kindly mannered man, who receives me with a wondering good nature, gives me a seat on a big chest by the window, and shouts to me to hold on by the brace. I do hold on. He opens a little black door and I see the iron monster's mouth full of red hot coals; he gives it a bite from a big pine tree in the shape of a stick of wood, then its mighty pulse begins to throb again, and thud, thud, pant, pant, its ponderous heart gives out its strength and up we climb once more, the grade this time three hundred and twenty feet to the mile. We reach the summit, and slowly descend a grade of two hundred and fifty feet to the mile towards Jerry's Run; at present an imaginary stream far below us on the left, where last year a tearful accident occurred to a train upon this road. It makes one shudder to look down and think what might again be as he remembers what has been.

After passing this point, the engineer shows me where the permanent road is being built, and I look down into a deep gulch where the track is already laid, which will lower the grade in many places hundreds of feet.³⁰ By extensive tunneling and deep cuts, the steep and dangerous ascents are to be avoided. But I am very glad it has been my good fortune to travel the road before the temporary track is abandoned. —The grades past, the extra engine again uncouples, and before I know it I am being run away with by the black monster, whose throat is full of flames and whose sobs have changed to a sort of chuckle as he sweeps away from the halted train with the ease of a summer swallow. I am a little anxious and troubled, as I have no desire to make my entree into White Sulphur on board a locomotive; but we stop as suddenly as we ran away. The senior partner and the conductor come to lift me down, and once more I take my seat in the car, delighted with my novel journey. Soon after, we entered the Alleghany Tunnel, which is four thousand eight hundred feet long, and in which convicts were at work in their prison garb each with a lantern, which was but a spark in the intense gloom. At half-past 1 P. M. we were at White Sulphur, the present terminus of the road, where we entered an omnibus and were driven to the hotel, situated but a short distance from the depot. —Here a handsome young physician and his mother from New York, and a gentleman and his wife from New Orleans, met us with cordial welcomes and joined our party. We were assigned a beautiful cottage—neatly furnished and containing five rooms, which nicely accommodated the immediate party from Stribling. After bathing, and a change of toilet, we repaired to the dining room, an immense apartment,

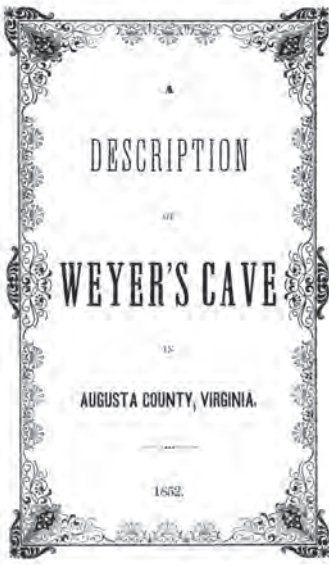
three hundred and twelve feet long, and supported by forty-four pillars. It is filled with round tables, and is said to be capacious enough to seat fifteen hundred guests. It opens into the parlor at one end and into the ball-room at the other, and looked at from either extreme when the lights are low and either extension room is illuminated, it looks very much like a pocket edition of the Alleghany tunnel. We are now about to explore in the neighboring mountains with its numerous walks, and as I am admonished that everyone waits for me, therefore I hasten to say adieu, I and wonder, as I say it, if you can ever manage to read my hasty and almost illegible scrawl. Xariffa.³¹

* * *

September, 1871. The porch at Stribling resembled a railroad depot on the departure of a train. There we all were assembled for a trip to Weyer's Cave — the ladies gloved and wrapped and lugubrious, the gentlemen all Knights of the Rueful Countenance. It rained — one of those drizzling, soaking, disreputable rains which finds its way into the country late in the season and takes possession of the land. In front of the door stood a dozen or so of vehicles, curtains down and aprons up, and horses hanging their heads as if ashamed to come in contact with such a mean storm, which never once blustered up into a brave, honest, tempest, with all its splendid auxiliaries of thunder, wind and lightning, but crept along slyly, like a thief, and laid itself down on the sleek coats of the poor steeds and made them shiver, and sneaked behind their ears and tickled them, and dribbled into their eyes and blinded them, and stole the dry ground from under their feet and left them standing in miserable little pools of dirty water.

To go or not to go, that was the question, which, put to vote, was finally settled in the affirmative. At once ensued a merry confusion, and umbrellas "rose with a voluptuous swell," and "there was mounting in hot haste," and everybody's "snack" got into everybody else's carriage, and everybody was mistaken for somebody else, and everybody was good-natured and made the best of everything, and away we went, Cousin George and the young doctor leading off, each with a pretty girl at his side, and carriages, phaetons, buggies and hacks, containing in all about thirty-five persons, in quick succession went splashing and dashing out of the gates through Moffat's Gap and down the country road. Who cared that it was a "misty, moisty morning?" as Mother Goose has it. Was it not novel and delightful to ride in the rain, to laugh in its face, to combat it, and defy it to cast a damper on our pleasure?

Through the queer little town of Parnassus, where not so much as a village pump stood to recall the fabled fount of the fabled Nine; through "Moscow," which no one would have suspected of being a village had he



Visitors to Weyer's Cave received a guidebook written by J. Leonard Mohler, who served at Xariffa's guide.

not been told of it; through the beautiful hamlet of Mossy Creek; through the "burnt district," where, for some Confederate success, or failure, the Federal General commanding ordered every barn for five miles around to be burned; through Mount Crawford, where the young minister joined us; through Bridgewater, which we found a pleasant looking, solid little town, inviting even on a rainy day. Up steep hills, down dripping valleys, past the wet woods, under shivering willows, the landscape scowling, the roads getting heavier, the rate of speed getting slower. Ever and anon "York's" kindly face beams out upon us from a forward carriage, his eyes laughing and his hair weeping great drops of rain-water. Useless to say to him, "Shake not thy gory locks at me." — He will shake them, and he will fling back at us

some witty bon mot as we round sharp spurs of mountains or splash across the plains. Suddenly the clouds break — there is a panic — they fly. The sun shines out, but lo! there is a strange shout greets his coming. There is confusion in our ranks. "York" has come to grief. A horse has dropped in the harness; the Senior Partner rubs him with a rider from the nearest fence, and while he thus rails at him "York's" flask is demanded. He yields it with a rye face. The horse imbibes, but he does not speedily revive. His driver leads him up and down the road. "No use — can't travel — bad case of thumps." A re-arrangement of passengers is made. The empty coach and the sick horse and mate are left at the roadside. "York" looks at his empty flask, at the dull eye and open mouth of the poor horse, and goes off resignedly, humming, "Thy sweet smile haunts me still."

By the time we had reached Mohler's Hotel³² the sun was shining, and the weather had become decidedly "child like and bland." — Shown to our rooms, and assisted by a charming little lassie, who called herself "Fannie," the grandchild of mine host, we made the change of dress necessary for all cave visitors and appeared at the dinner table a merry calico brigade. They have a peculiar way of cooking chicken and making biscuit at Mohler's, which has the singular effect of making the partaker more and more hungry the longer he eats. There surely was never anything more delicious. Like Oliver Twist, everybody wanted more, and unlike the said O.T., everybody

got it. The supply was inexhaustible; and then the rich cream for the coffee had a special sort of fascination about it, which was constantly leading us into temptation. Appetite, at last, however, demanded an armistice, and with light shawls, and veils tied over the heads of the ladies, we started for the cave. The path led down a rocky road, which lay along a brawling, turbulent, beautiful stream, the south fork of the Shenandoah.³³ From this road a zigzag path leads up a steep hill, where, in the midst of rocks, and ferns and overhanging boughs we found Mr. S., who had preceded us, quietly seated on a stone and smoking his cigar. The path ended at his resting place, though the summit of the hill was still some distance above us. Near the door of a rude, wooden hut, which covers the mouth of the cave and which is always kept locked, save when opened to visitors, I beheld with consternation a yellow dog! I would not mention it, save to say that this sort of beast has joined me on every excursion I have made in Virginia. He has become, in fact, a species of ubiquitous familiar. I trust you will not accuse me of an Irishism if I declare to you, of course in strict confidence, that my bete noir is a yellow dog. I am aware that it is the creature's misfortune, not his fault, to be a jaundiced canine, and I know he doesn't deserve to be treated in a contumelious manner, even though he be the color of a hospital flag; still I must confess that "a vague unrest, and a nameless longing fills my breast" whenever I meet one. From end to the other of Augusta county—on the tops of mountains—among the cyclopean towers; in the valleys, even in the very dens of foxes and abiding places of bats, go where I may, I am haunted by a yellow dog! This one had a villainous countenance, and looked as if he had been whipped from generation to generation, but he wagged his tail as I approached, and looked at me appealingly, yet familiarly, as though he had heard of me from all his distant relations.

At the entrance to the cave the guide gave each of us a tallow candle stuck into a socket in front of a sort of tin shield with a handle to it. Each carried this piece of furniture with the shield toward his face, the candle toward his neighbor's back—an admirable arrangement, by-the-by, for presenting one's friends with illustrations of Greece. Stooping low and walking in Indian file, we passed the guard-room, where a number of stalagmites, in rigid order, stood like so many sentinels, as if to protect the entrance to this strange and marvelous house, not made with hands. Passing these unchallenged, all the weird stories heard in my childhood of enchanted castles, and giants, and fairies, rushed upon my mind. The massive walls, of a russet color, rose around me, carved in the quaintest devices, calling to mind what I had read of the catacombs of Rome and the ghastly architecture with which

monkish taste has embellished certain other convent vaults. Next in order came Solomon's throne—a raised seat of peculiar formation, and a little further on we were shown a stone canopy so delicately formed, so exquisitely colored, I could liken it only to an immense mushroom deprived of its stem and suspended there. From this point we entered the shell-room, where the beautiful mingling of russet and white had a charming effect, and the shell-like formations pendent from the ceiling were beautifully transparent as the guide passed his light behind them. Here in front of us rose a tall, isolated, white bit of natural sculpture, which glittered purely in the blaze of the many lights displaying an empty niche which seemed to have been formed for a statue. This the guide named "Cora's Throne," in honor of one of the young girls present,³⁴ and next we were shown the meat-house, a huge cavity, much like a farmer's smoke house for drying meat. The guide understands how to throw just enough light on this place for the visitor to indistinctly see a nice stone ham suspended from the ceiling, and another lying on the ground. "I asked for bread and ye gave me a stone" wickedly pops into one's head at this point, and we pass on to view the elephant's head, which, trunk and all, is discernible across a small chasm, and further on we look down in to a deep pit, the "bottomless pit" of course, as it is just next door to the "Devil's Bake-Oven," where one looks into a dismal cavity through a small, irregular aperture, and sees—nothing. Next comes the Tapestry Chamber, where the walls seem hung with marvelous drapery, and the solid stone assumes the grace of a lady's laces or the rich softness of magnificently draped velvet. I paused here in mute wonder and gazed about me in dumb awe. For how many centuries had nature in her solitude wrought upon these wonderful hangings, more rare and more exquisite than any Gobelin tapestry that every adorned the wails of princes or commanded the admiration of kings? In impenetrable darkness—a darkness unknown to the outer world, a dark-



This illustration of an underground tour of Weyer's Cave, now called Grand Caverns, is taken from Virginia Illustrated: Containing a visit to the Virginian Canaan, and the adventures of Porte Crayon and his cousins, by Porte Crayon (David Hunter Strother) published in 1857.

ness which no sunbeam has ever dispelled and no star-ray ever pierced, she has curtained these massive walls with tapestries which the looms of India can never equal—threading her shuttle with a mystic thread, such as human ingenuity has never produced, and weaving her fabric into festoons such as surpass the most fabulous works of art. There they hang in their frozen fragility—delicate as the drapery of a lady's boudoir, yet firm as the solid rock. Frail enough in appearance to be stirred by the motion of a girl's fan, yet immutable as the laws of God. No wind has ever shaken them, no touch has ever rearranged them, no human hand shall ever lift them aside. Passing on, we entered the cathedral, also most brilliantly illuminated, the candles around the strange chancel and upon the magnificent altar burning with a weird brightness and flickering upon a roof brilliant with many pendants and upon walls which in many places seemed set with precious gems. Was any one ever married at that altar? Was any one ever buried beneath those aisles? Next came the armory, containing "The Shield of Ajax"—a beautiful shield-shaped formation projecting from the wall. Next we entered "The Drum Room," where a certain stalactite struck in a certain way gives forth the sound of a beaten drum. Next came the ball-room—a long apartment with a smooth hard floor—a natural platform at one end for the musicians, a stalagmite some four feet high beside it to hold a lamp, a beautiful stalactite pendant from the ceiling just in the centre of the room for a chandelier, and a beautiful grotto at one side for a lady's dressing-room. This also was illuminated. Mr. Kinney had brought along a member of his band, and

"A hundred lights are glancing
In yonder mansion fair,
And merry feet are dancing,
They heed not morning there."³⁵

Such a dance! How grotesque must the scene have appeared to any one who could have peeped down at us through some chink in the rock above! Daisy and Adele in brown skirts and red jackets, and their heads tied up in green veils, flew about, like two little imps with green heads and red bodies, "native and to the manner born." Yonder, out of the shadow and into the light, and again out of the light and into the gloom, float graceful girlish forms, and the senior partner dances as if the weights of business had dropped forever from his feet, and the fiddler fiddles as if his body and soul had become absorbed in the instrument; and from the walls strange forms seem to start out, and gnomes, and imps, and elves, and fairies seem smirking and smiling at us as half breathless; at last we follow the guides out of the ball-room and through "Fat Man's Misery."—This is a crooked, narrow,

low-ceiled passage, through which the lean wriggle and the stout squeeze, all half bent, half walking and half crawling, and emerging quickly, for the way is short, beside a round-raised platform, perfectly flat, and called "The Tea Table." Down on this table emphatically sat Mr. S., declaring he could go no further. Mrs. R and Mrs. B. echoed his sentiments and we regretfully left them alone in their glory—though Mr. S. cheerfully assured us that he had seen "the elephant" and was satisfied. We now descended a steep stone staircase, known as Jacob's ladder (and worthy of the name since Jacob Mohler made it) and passed through "The Senate Chamber," where a dapper little stone senator had the floor, and, no doubt, has had it for hundreds and hundreds of years, and into "Washington Hall" or "The Palace of the Gnome Kings." The illumination here was particularly fine, showing off the vast apartment to excellent advantage. This room is one hundred yards long, about forty feet high, and averages twenty feet in width. In the centre rises a fine stalagmite, which, viewed from one side and in a certain light, bears a resemblance to Washington. Looked at from another point, and by far the best, it is a fine, life-size figure of an Indian chief. The last of the Pawnees, there he stands in stony sternness, meditating upon the wrongs done his exterminated race.—Numerous little alcoves and ante-chambers open off of this hall, one of which is known as Lady Washington's dressing-room, where a huge mirror, well posed, casts no reflections, and which is otherwise adorned in a taste that staid Mrs. W. in life certainly never acknowledged. Grouped together at one end of the long hall the guide requested two of the young ladies to retire to the other end and sing. They cheerfully complied and sang "Too Late." —The effect was at once startling and solemn. —The peculiar echoes of the place took up the sounds and it seemed as if a large choir were chanting as the unseen singers, with voices sweetly blended, poured forth the thrilling notes. "Too late! too late!" came ringing down to us from the alcoves, and niches, and domes and spires, and I stood spell-bound, thrilled with a strange awe, and impressed as I had never been before.

Next we were shown the "Leaning Tower of Pisa," and a "White Heron" quietly standing on one foot in a cosy little niche, then the "Post Office," a cavity in the wall, which held no letters for any of our party; and "The Organ," upon whose weird pipes the guide struck out some sweetly clear musical notes. Then came "The Bridal Chamber." There was the bride's comb with the white veil gracefully draped over it, and the bridal gifts, a complete shower of glittering jewels scattered about in the most enchanting profusion, and beautifully shown off upon the russet background. Thence

we proceeded to "The Garden of Eden," and all along the way I could detect some madonnas, and monks, and witches, and nuns, and demons watching us in stony silence from the walls as we penetrated the mystic depths of their domain. The guide then proposed that we should extinguish our lights and keep perfectly still. We did so. What a hush! Verily the outer world knows no silence. There is always a bird's twitter, the motion of leaves, the rustle of grass, the lap of waves that makes the combination of sounds which we call silence. But here, not a cricket's chirp, not an insect's flight, not a rustled leaf, not a passing wind broke the stillness, the weight of which was painfully oppressive. The words of the old song occurred to me: "I listened for one footfall, I listened for one word; But the beating of my own heart Was all the sound I heard!"³⁶

It was a relief, though the effect was startling, when the whole place was suddenly illuminated by a magnesium light, held in such a position that a weird moonlight effect would be produced, and ghostly shadows seemed to move about the walls and crawl about our feet. By this light we saw the Natural Bridge, a stone structure varying in height from twenty to forty feet, and from its base to the roof above the height varies from eighty to one hundred feet, as near as it been possible to ascertain. Next came "The Tower of Babel," and back of it a wild mass of stone, which seems by some convulsion of nature to have been torn from its primeval abiding place and tossed in the wildest confusion, thus to remain fixed. "Visitors never go there," said the guide; but, sure of my chamois-like propensity for climbing, I ventured, assisted by Bell, and was repaid to find myself in a spot where Jones and Smith and Brown had not written their names, and visitors had not dared to climb for specimens. I named it "Chaos," and left its grand ruins and its magnificent rockwork to once more join the party and go on past the couch of "The Sleeping Beauty," where the fringed coverlet conceals the well-defined form; then to the "Winter Scene," a particularly beautiful sight, where the later formations being white, here and there look like drifted snow upon the apparently frozen ground. Then came the "Oyster Saloon," where gigantic oyster shells, four or five feet in height and breadth, yawn at you, and here we have reached the terminus of the cave. Oh cascades, rivulet, towers, castles, domes, spires, palaces, how are ye pictured on my brain! Said a dear friend to me as we walked side by side, "To me it was as if I had been roaming through a vast sunken cathedral; and no architecture that I ever saw in the Old World or the New ever impressed me as has the sight of this wonderful cavern."

Is it after all not some place under the spell of enchantment? Did not the

Wizard sit up aloft somewhere as we passed along, hidden among the beautiful stalactites that embellish the roof? Is there not some hour at the dead of night when he lifts the spell and the cascades flow, and the Madonnas come down from the wall to attend mass in the cathedral, and the dapper little senator gathers around him a vast assembly, and Washington and the Pawnee chief hold council together, and the White Heron goes down to drink from the spring in the Garden of Eden, and the elves and fairies dance in the ball room, and the monks and the nuns, and the gnomes and the demons people the castles and cloisters, and play their pranks, and tell their beads, and mutter their prayers, and chant their ayes before the great organ? And do not these strange little people sing epithalamiums while the bride puts on her wedding garments, and adjusts her bridal veil, and decorates her person with her splendid jewels? And then, no doubt, the party has its feasts in the palace of the Gnome Kings, and the Sleeping Beauty awakes, and throws back the folds of her coverlet, and, perhaps, takes the Senator's arm and repairs to the oyster saloon to regale herself upon a "dozen fried!" And there are queer little faces at the post office window, calling for letters, and strange processions cross the natural bridge, until the wizard moves his wand and condemns them once more to silence and stone! In going out we turned a little from the beaten path to visit the "Infernal Regions," and then proceeded past the convoluted drapery of the tapestry chamber and on to the tea table, which we found deserted. Mr. S. and ladies had been found by another guide and taken out before our return. The temperature of the cave is always the same, winter and summer — 56° — and the visitor suffers from no oppression while traversing the cave. When we emerged it was night outside, and looking at our watches, we found we had been three hours underground. The cave was discovered in 1804, by Mr. Weyer, while hunting. Some animal having constantly dragged off his trap, he traced it, and thus found the entrance to the cavern. Thus, for the discovery of all the treasure of this great subterranean castle, we are indebted to a ground-hog!

The surface of the hill in which the cave is situated contains a farm, comprising field, vineyard, forest and orchard. Once more returning to the hospitable shelter of Mohler's Hotel, which is said to be conducted by four of the handsomest men in Virginia,³⁷ we supped and slept—seven of our party having the nightmare, and one waking all her neighbors by screaming while dreaming that the elephant of the cave had her in his trunk and was swinging her over the bottomless pit. Next morning, we found our sick horse was dead—a hack-offering sacrificed upon the altar of pleasure excursions—Hiring another, we turned toward Stribling, passing on our homeward way the battle fields of Piedmont. Xariffa.³⁸

Endnotes

¹*Woman of the Century: Fourteen Hundred-Seventy Biographical Sketches Accompanied by Portraits of Leading American Women in all Walks of Life*. Frances E. Willard and Mary A. Livermore, eds. Buffalo: Charles Wells Moulton, 1893, p. 720. "Life in a Trunk, Number 1," New Orleans *Times-Picayune*, July 30, 1871., p. 12, col. 6. Born September 24, 1832, in Lyons, New York, Mary Ashley Van Voorhis Townsend died June 7, 1901, and was interred in Metairie Cemetery in New Orleans.

²Travelers moving west on the railroad from Charlottesville to Staunton in 1871 encountered four tunnels: Greenwood (536 feet long), Brooksville (864 feet), Little Rock (100 feet) and, near the summit, the Blue Ridge Tunnel (4,264 feet or 8/10 of a mile). The anticipation of Xariffa and her fellow travelers is understandable given that the Blue Ridge Tunnel was considered a modern marvel. It was the longest railway tunnel in America and was renowned as a stupendous feat of engineering and labor. The Brooksville Tunnel was informally referred to as the Kelly Tunnel to honor the principal contractor, John Kelly of Ireland. James Poyntz Nelson, comp. *Claudius Crozet; His Story of the Four Tunnels in the Blue Ridge Region of Virginia on the Chesapeake and Ohio railway, Constructed 1849-1858*. Richmond, Va., Mitchell & Hotchkiss, 1917. p. 5. See also: Mary E. Lyons, "How John Kelly Saved the Blue Ridge Tunnel," *Crozet Gazette*, November 6, 2015. <https://www.crozetgazette.com/2015/11/06/how-john-kelly-saved-the-blue-ridge-tunnel/> viewed April 2020.

³Federal troops belonging to Gen. Philip Sheridan's army soundly defeated the remnants of Gen. Jubal Early's Confederate army at Waynesboro, March 2, 1865.

⁴Manchac, Louisiana, northwest of New Orleans.

⁵*The Staunton Spectator* reprinted only this fragment August 22, 1871, p. 1, col. 7. For the full letter, which covers the train ride from Knoxville, through Bristol, Lynchburg and north to Charlottesville, see: "Life in a Trunk, No. II," Letter dated "En Route, July 1871." *The Times-Picayune* (New Orleans, Louisiana) August 6, 1871, p. 4, col. 1.

⁶The two battles at Manassas, Virginia, July 21, 1861, and August 29-30, 1862, were fought approximately ninety-eight miles from the stated location of the spring.

⁷While Xariffa identifies by name several of the Virginians she meets, she chooses to use nicknames or only first names to veil the identities of most of her fellow travelers.

⁸Chesley Kinney (1819-1886) belonged to a prominent Augusta family. His father, Nicholas Cabell Kinney (1792-1859) was clerk of the circuit superior court for twenty-eight years and seven other men of the family served as clerks of the county or circuit courts. Five Kinneys served as mayor of Staunton. Chesley Kinney married Betsy Ann Bell (1821-1869), of Fort Defiance, May 21, 1844, and together they had five children, three of whom died young, two of them during the war. By the time of Xariffa's visit in 1871, Kinney was a fifty-one-year-old widower, and two of his children lived with him at the Springs: twenty-one-year-old daughter, Elizabeth, and son James, age sixteen. The 1860 census incorrectly carries the family as "Kenney." H. Milton McIlhany, *Some Virginia Families: Being Genealogies of the Kinney, Stribling, Trout, McIlhany, Milton, Rogers, Tate, Snickers, Taylor, McCormick, and Other Families of Virginia*. Staunton, Va.: Stoneburner & Prufer, printers, 1903, pp. 2, 7, 10, 37.

⁹Erasmus Stribling (1784-1858) practiced law in Staunton and had "owned and developed" the property later known as Stribling Springs. In 1807, he married Matilda Kinney (1789-1829), and thus the two families most associated with the springs were joined. Around 1850, a Bailey Shumate had purchased the property, but Chesley Kinney bought it in 1857, just a year before Erasmus Stribling's death. The property was known as Augusta Springs under Shumate's ownership, but new owner Kinney renamed it "Stribling Springs" in honor of his kinsman Stribling. Stribling's son, Dr. Francis Taliaferro Stribling (1810-1874), was raised at the springs and achieved eminence for his pioneering work in psychiatry. He was for many years the superintendent of the Western State Asylum in Staunton. Hugh Milton McIlhany, *Some Virginia Families: Being Genealogies of the Kinney, Stribling, Trout, McIlhany, Milton, Rogers, Tate, Snickers, Taylor, McCormick, and Other Families of Virginia*, Staunton: Stoneburner & Prufer, printers, 1903, p. 5, 37, 41.

¹⁰Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749-1832), German literary figure.

¹¹Xariffa used "senior partner" or "SP" to refer to her husband, Gideon Townsend (1826-1899). He was prominent in Orleans finance and would serve as president of the New Orleans Stock Exchange. Obituary in *The Times-Picayune* (New Orleans, Louisiana), May 31, 1899, page 14, col. 3.

¹²King James Bible, 2 Samuel 1:20.

¹³The buildings at Stribling Springs had been used as a Confederate hospital in 1862, and perhaps later. Men who died at the hospital were interred nearby, but the precise location of the cemetery is unknown. In 1870, the remains of Confederate soldiers buried on area battlefields – including McDowell, Cross Keys, Port Republic, Piedmont – and in the cemetery at Stribling Springs were removed to Thornrose Cemetery in Staunton.

¹⁴All three of Xariffa's daughters joined their parents on the trip to Virginia: Cora Alice, would have been about sixteen in 1871, Adele Cephiste, about ten years old in 1871, and Daisy, birth year unknown, the youngest.

¹⁵"Life in a Trunk, Number III," Letter dated "Stribling Springs, Va., July, 1871." *Staunton Spectator*, August 29, 1871, p. 1, col. 5. Reprinted from *The Times-Picayune* (New Orleans, Louisiana) August 13, 1871, p. 11, col. 2. "Number IV" in the series has not been found, and the editor of the *Spectator* stated he did not see it. Numbers 8, 9, and 10 also were not found in the *Picayune*.

¹⁶The turnpike connected Warm Springs in Bath County with Harrisonburg. A part of the route followed modern Stover Shop Road (SR 728), which is the segment praised by Xariffa. After the battle of McDowell, May 8, 1862, Gen. Thomas J. "Stonewall" Jackson marched his troops over this road though Stribling Springs and Bridgewater and beyond as part of his renowned Valley Campaign.

¹⁷The intersection today is the junction of U.S. Rt. 250 and Stover Shop Rd. (SR 728) and is best known for White's Wayside restaurant. Kinney correctly identified Conway Robinson Howard (1832-1895), a Confederate engineering officer throughout the war who worked for Gen. A.P. Hill beginning in July 1862. Robert E. L. Krick, *Staff Officers in Gray: A Biographical Register of the Staff Officers in the Army of Northern Virginia* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2014), p. 164.

¹⁸Jacob J. lossbrenner (1818-1887), bishop of the United Brethren Church, lived less than a mile west of Churchville on the south side of the Jennings Gap Road (modern Rte. 250), in what was described in 1887 as a "pretty cottage home." *Staunton Spectator*, January 12, 1887, p. 3, col. 1.; Jed Hotchkiss map of the Shenandoah Valley, Library of Congress.

¹⁹Original reads "widows."

²⁰Elliott Knob, at 4,462 feet, is the third-highest summit in Virginia and the highest in Virginia west of the Shenandoah Valley. It is significantly higher than Flat Top (4,001 feet), the highest of the three Peaks of Otter, which are in the Blue Ridge chain.

²¹James A. Cochran (1766-1836) owned, occupied, and almost certainly built the brick mansion, which, along with the 330-acre farm on which it sat, was called Loch Willow. Cochran's first son, James Addison Cochran (1804-1856), was born in the house and made his home there after his father's death. After the death in 1856 of James the son, his son, also named James Addison Cochran (1828-1883), acted as executor of the estate and in 1859 sold the house and the farm to Nelson Hotchkiss (1819-1891), brother of the famous cartographer Jed Hotchkiss (1828-1898). The Hotchkiss brothers and their families lived at Loch Willow until 1863, when they sold the property to John B. Evans (1828-1905) of Staunton. Mr. Kinney accurately stated to Xariffa both the sale price of the farm (\$18,000 Confederate dollars) and the absenteeism of Evans, who never occupied Loch Willow and continued to live in Staunton, where he worked as a tobacconist. Deed Books 78, p. 388; 81, p. 281; and 83, p. 522, Augusta County Court House.

²²Kinney apparently took the shortest route home, following modern Hotchkiss Road to Stover Shop Road and on westward to pick up the course of Moffett Creek west of Jennings Gap Road and follow it back to Stribling Springs.

²³"Life in a Trunk, Number V," Letter dated "Stribling Springs, Aug., 1871." *Staunton Spectator*, September 12, 1871, p. 1, col. 5. Reprinted from *The Times-Picayune* (New Orleans, Louisiana), August 27, 1871, p. 4, col. 1.

²⁴Members of the F.F.V., or "First Families of Virginia" were socially prominent, usually wealthy and claimed their lineage could be traced to Virginia's earliest English colonists.

²⁵The simple guessing game, usually played with children, in which one player presents both fists, one of which holds a treat or prize. The guesser wins the prize by selecting the correct fist.

²⁶"Life in a Trunk, Number VI," Letter dated "Stribling Springs, Augusta County, Va., August, 1871." *Staunton Spectator*, September 19, 1871, p. 1, col. 5. Attributed to New Orleans *Picayune*, not found, date unknown.

²⁷An event of interest not recorded by Xariffa was the Coronation Ball at Stribling Springs in early September. The ball, held in connection with the annual Jousting Tournament at nearby Mount Solon, permitted the champion "knight," in this case local boy William Bell, to crown the "Queen of Love and Beauty." "Sir William," selected as his queen sixteen-year old Cora Townsend of New Orleans. *The Valley Virginian*, September 14, 1871, p. 3, col. 2.

²⁸John O'Toole owned the American Hotel Livery Stables. *Staunton Spectator*, August 15, 1871, p. 4, col. 7.

²⁹Presumably a Mr. Santini of New Orleans, whose daughter, Marietta, was a student at the Virginia Female Seminary in Staunton. See *The Valley Virginian*, September 14, 1871, p. 3, col. 2. and *The Times-Picayune* (New Orleans, Louisiana), July 4, 1871, p. 4, col. 1.

³⁰The modern CSX tracks cross Jerry's Run about five miles east of White Sulphur Springs. Xariffa may have been looking down into the gorge called Cannonball Hollow.

³¹"Life in a Trunk, Number Seven," Letter dated "White Sulphur Springs, Va., Sept, 1871." *Staunton Spectator*, October 3, 1871, p. 1, col. 6. Reprinted from *The Times-Picayune* (New Orleans, Louisiana), September 14, 1871, p. 2, col. 1.

³²Mohler's Hotel stood in modern Grottoes, just a few hundred yards from the entrance to Weyer's Cave. The home of farmer Abram Mohler (1812-1892), the hotel was frequented by travelers along the Blue Ridge for decades. Son John Leonard Mohler (1840-1937) worked tirelessly to promote the cave as a tourist destination.

³³The South River.

³⁴One of Xariffa's three daughters.

³⁵From "The Watcher," by American poet Sarah J. Hale.

³⁶From "The Brookside" by British poet Richard Monckton Milnes.

³⁷Possibly a reference to Abram Mohler, age fifty-eight, and his three sons J. Leonard, Henry, age twenty-seven; Henry M., age twenty-three, and Jacob R., age twenty.

³⁸"Life in a Trunk, Number Twelve," Letter dated September, 1871. *Staunton Spectator*, November 14, 1871, p. 1, col. 4. Reprinted from *The Times-Picayune* (New Orleans, Louisiana). October 29, 1871, p. 6, col. 1.

Vote the Valley Green: Reflections on the Green Party's Brief Attempt to Build a Base in the Central Valley in 1997

By Daniel A. Métraux

***Editor's Note:** The year 2020 will be remembered for many things, including a global pandemic. It was also the year of a consequential U.S. Presidential election. Thanks to Associate Editor Daniel Métraux for reminding us that all elections have consequence in a democracy. Enjoy his recollections of a local election from the past in which he was a participant.*

Historically, the United States has developed a two party system leaving little or no room for third party or independent candidacies. Quite often when one party becomes so dominant in a certain region, the opposition party often concedes the region by not entering a candidate who would surely lose. The outcome is obvious, so there is no need to run candidates and waste precious dollars in a useless race. Such was the case in the Central Shenandoah Valley in the late 1990s. The Republican Party was dominant across much of Virginia at that time and held a stranglehold on much of the Shenandoah Valley. Republican dominance was so strong in the central Valley that there were many occasions where the Democratic Party failed to field candidates for House of Delegates and State Senate races or even for elections to the House of Representatives. Sensing an opportunity to gain a foothold in this region, the Green Party of Virginia chose to nominate candidates to run against four state legislators in 1997, three Republican members of the House of Delegates and one Democratic State Senator. The following narrative describes my own campaign as one of these candidates in what was in 1997 Virginia's 24th Legislative District.

The Virginia Green Party, founded in 1993 with its headquarters in Falls Church near Washington, has a broad political platform that includes protection and conservation of the environment, human and civil rights, protection of workers, and much more. It has contested many state and local races throughout Virginia and has won a small number of races for city council or Soil and Water Conservation Board seats. My own electoral history follows this pattern. I lost badly in a race against Republican Vance Wilkins in a 1997 contest for the

House of Delegates, but won a seat on the Headwaters Soil and Conservation Board in 2007.

The Green Party ran candidates for the House of Delegates in the Valley in 1997 not necessarily to win some seats, but rather to familiarize the public that the idea that the party was a legitimate alternative to both the Republican and Democratic parties in the state. Green candidates would air the philosophical ideals of the party while at the same time offering voters a choice of whom to vote for.

I had always been a supporter of the key values of the Green Party and had always voted for our native victorious Green candidates for national office in Swiss general elections (I am a dual citizen in the U.S. and Switzerland and am entitled to vote in both countries). Since I moved my family from our native New England to Staunton in early 1983 to take a teaching post in Asian Studies at Mary Baldwin College, I had only on occasion been involved in local politics in Staunton. It was in April, 1997, shortly after I had signed a form to join the Green Party that I received a call from a group of local Greens wanting to know if I was interested in running as a Green candidate that November against Republican House Minority Leader Vance Wilkins of Amherst in the 24th district. I agreed on the spot and after a meeting of Green leaders received a formal nomination. Other Green candidates included Sherry Stanley who ran against Republican Delegate Steve Landes, Eli Fishpough against State Senator Creigh Deeds, and Charles Jordan who ran for the House in the Roanoke area.

I have always been fascinated with politics and have long been a “political junkie.” Growing up in Greenwich Village in New York City in the 1950s and 1960s, I was very much involved in the 1960 and 1964 campaigns for John F. Kennedy and Lyndon Johnson. I even did some campaign work on behalf of the British Labour Party in the 1964 national election.

I knew full well that I had no chance to win against Delegate Wilkins, but I considered it a chance to experience something new. I had nothing to lose and felt that it was my civic duty to give voters a choice on Election Day. It would also give me a chance to voice my views on such questions as protection of the environment, opposition to the death penalty and civil rights for gays including same-sex marriage.

There were also some very real obstacles. I had little or no money to spare for a serious campaign, still only shallow roots in the Valley, and a set of sick in-laws in Boston and a mother entering full blown dementia living on her own in northern Vermont. I had to spend the whole summer of 1997 dealing with my mother’s problems with the full realization that she could no longer

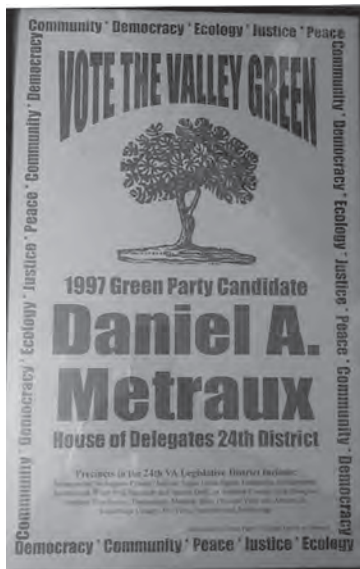
live alone. As her sole living child I had the full responsibility of her care and welfare. There were legal hearings and a long search for an affordable nursing home nearby. Fortunately, by mid-August I had cleared all legal obstacles and was able to place my mother in a very caring, high quality and affordable nursing home's Alzheimer's ward. I returned to Staunton around Labor Day to start a new year of full time teaching at Mary Baldwin College. I could only wage a part-time campaign with limited funds and little mobility, but I was determined to succeed.

My first task was to solicit 125 or more signatures from local residents. I quickly procured these by going from office to office at the college, greeting guests at the local YMCA, and soliciting support on local street corners in Staunton. My only disappointment came when I asked MBC president Cynthia Tyson for her signature. She politely refused, noting that "I am a member of the opposition party."

The formal start of many modern Virginia campaigns is a Labor Day weekend march of candidates through the streets of the town of Buena Vista near Lexington and a gathering where each candidate for state office was expected to make short campaign speech. All candidates for state office march through the town and then give speeches in a large wooden building. I marched with a group of Greens, gave a short speech where I got quite a few cheers when advocating gay rights, and met many voters. I was deeply touched when Republican gubernatorial candidate Jim Gilmore later rushed over to me to apologize for quickly leaving the stage to get a phone call just when I was speaking.

The Buena Vista event provided me with an opportunity to meet with Vance Wilkins to discuss our campaign. It was a warm and respectful exchange. Wilkins said he was glad to have an opponent so as to have somebody to campaign against and to give greater meeting to several scheduled campaign forums. I told him that I was running to give voters a choice and to express my ideas on various issues that needed to be heard by interested parties, I explained that because I thought my chances of winning were minimal at best, I would prefer to wage an issues oriented campaign where there would be no personal attacks directed at each other. Wilkins readily agreed.

I also invited Mr. Wilkins to come to Mary Baldwin sometime in October for a friendly debate before groups of students from several classes. Wilkins, a strong supporter of the Mary Baldwin's VWIL (Virginia Women's Institute for Leadership) program, was viewed warmly President Tyson and my invitation seemed appropriate. We set a date for the debate and agreed to participate in several joint campaign events.



Métraux's campaign poster in 1997.

The campaign itself was a fairly quiet affair. I had a hundred Green Party posters made up which several downtown businesses and restaurants kindly displayed in their windows. I raised about \$100 from several MBC colleagues, a very paltry sum compared to \$151,000 raised by Wilkins and partly donated to other Republican candidates. I realized that local newspapers could offer free publicity and was able to attract a few interviews with papers in Staunton and Waynesboro. The local PBS station in Harrisonburg invited all candidates to

each give a five to ten minute talk discussing our views on key issues. Another paper gave each candidate a chance to submit a brief article promoting each of our campaigns. Thus the press proved to be a very useful instrument for informing the public about the campaigns. Candidates with little or no money need to nurture strong media attention.

I had little time to campaign door to door because of my demanding teaching schedule, but I did participate in all of the scheduled forums for candidates. Public forums were well attended because the presence of Green candidates meant that each race was contested. If candidates were running without any opposition, the forums would not occur and nobody would have a chance to meet the candidates and discuss the major issues of the day. These meetings were polite and thoughtful affairs and we were pleased to hear our opponents compliment us on our constructive campaigns.

One joint meeting in Staunton included dinner for all participants. I invited Vance Wilkins to join me and a Mary Baldwin colleague at my table and used the opportunity to compare our campaigns. Wilkins remembered his early days as a Republican candidate in local elections when the GOP barely existed in Virginia. He suggested that Greens might have a future in the state, but that it would take many years of hard work and grass roots organizing. I asked him if our race had been close, would he use negative advertising and personal attacks. He admitted that he would — “The objective of elections is to win and negative ads can bring in many votes in a closely contested race.”

Our October debate at Mary Baldwin went well. We met for seventy-five minutes in a large class room with about fifty students. We made opening

statements where we brought forward our key campaign ideas—I talked about the desirability of gay rights including single-sex marriage, restrictions on gun ownership, opposition to the death penalty and so on. Wilkins opposed each of those points, but we both agreed that the new state lottery was an unfortunate tax on the poor. Students eagerly posed numerous questions. The debate itself was well reported the next day by the *Daily News Leader*.

The election on November 4, 1997 itself passed quietly with a low voter turnout. Jim Gilmore won the governorship in a landslide and Wilkins won easily:

Candidate	Votes	Expenditures
Wilkins	12, 715 (83.48%)	\$151,000
Métraux	2,516 (16.52%)	\$340

Wilkins won a resounding victory, but I was satisfied with my efforts. We encouraged a worthy exchange of ideas while maintaining a sense of dignity about the campaign process. The other Green candidates also fared well, garnering about the same percentage of the votes as I had attracted. Unfortunately, the 1997 race was the only time that the Greens made a concerted attempt to launch a multi-candidate race, but it was an interesting experience for us all and we were satisfied that we gave the public a choice of candidates.

Vance Wilkins became Speaker of the Virginia House of Delegates in 2000 and served for two years before resigning his post and seat in 2002.

A Stealth Green Victory in 2007

Virginia has a network of regional Soil & Water Conservation Boards whose Directors are elected for four-year terms. The Boards spend a lot of time and money promoting better farming and conservation practices including the creation of riparian zones near rivers in order to better water quality and keep cows away from the streams. The local Board is the Headwaters Soil & Water Conservation Board with six elected Directors, two each from Staunton, Waynesboro, and Augusta County.

Unfortunately voters pay little attention to these Board elections. There are times when there are no candidates listed on the official ballots, meaning that elections are decided by write in votes. In November 2007 there were two seats up for election in Staunton but only one candidate was on the ballot—long-time member Steve Talley of Staunton. The other incumbent, Roy Stephenson, a local farmer and former managing editor of the *Daily New Leader*, had a coterie of voters who reliably wrote his name in and guaranteed his election each time he ran. He was so confident of victory that he did not bother to gather signatures to get his name on the ballot.

I got a call from Green Party officials in northern Virginia late on Sunday night before the election informing me that there was a vacant spot on the ballot that Tuesday for the Board. They said that I should run as a write-in candidate and that I could win a seat if I could get enough friends and colleagues to vote for me. They said that I should not publicize my move – that my campaign should be one of “stealth” where we would suddenly emerge as unexpected winners on Election Day. I gathered that stealth election campaigns are a usual practice of the Green Party—to organize a quiet campaign that will shock the other candidates on Election Day.

I agreed with this proposal and immediately emailed friends and colleagues at Mary Baldwin as well as people I knew on various clubs and organizations like the Forum Club where I had an active membership. Overall I reached out to over sixty folks in Staunton asking them to write in my name. When the votes were counted on Tuesday night, Steve Talley had over 1,500 votes. I had forty-two votes, nine more than the very surprised Stephenson. I became only the third Green candidate in history to win a state post in any election in Virginia. It was a short victorious campaign that cost me nothing.

This election experience led to four years on the Board. I was greeted warmly by the other Directors, but I had a lot to learn about local environmental practices and riparian zones on local rivers. I decided that I would not run for re-election, but I found my time on the Board to be very educational. I was very impressed in the dedication and hard high quality work of state employees working with the Board.

Today Democrats are doing a lot better throughout Virginia and have become a force in places like Staunton. There are now hotly contested races for the State Senate and House of Delegates with Democrats often carrying the city of Staunton, but faring less well in more conservative areas of Augusta County.

Endnotes

¹The 24th VA Legislative District in 1997 included the whole of Staunton, much of Augusta County and surrounding areas and a few towns in Amherst County.

²One local wag was amused with the names Métraux, Stanley and Fishpough, noting that it sounded like a scouting group for the Lewis and Clark expedition.

³Creigh Deeds was then and still is a Democratic State Senator from Bath County.

⁴Indeed, in a neighboring district nobody was on the ballot in the Conservation Board election. For the fun of it a local businessman wrote in his name as did his wife and brother. He was startled to learn later that evening that he was the winner with three votes.

⁵I had to resign with only a few months left in my term because my mother-in-law in Boston became very ill and my wife and I had to spend three months up there caring for her. It seemed unfair for me to be an absent member.

Slave Labor on the Blue Ridge Railroad: Augusta County

By Mary E. Lyons

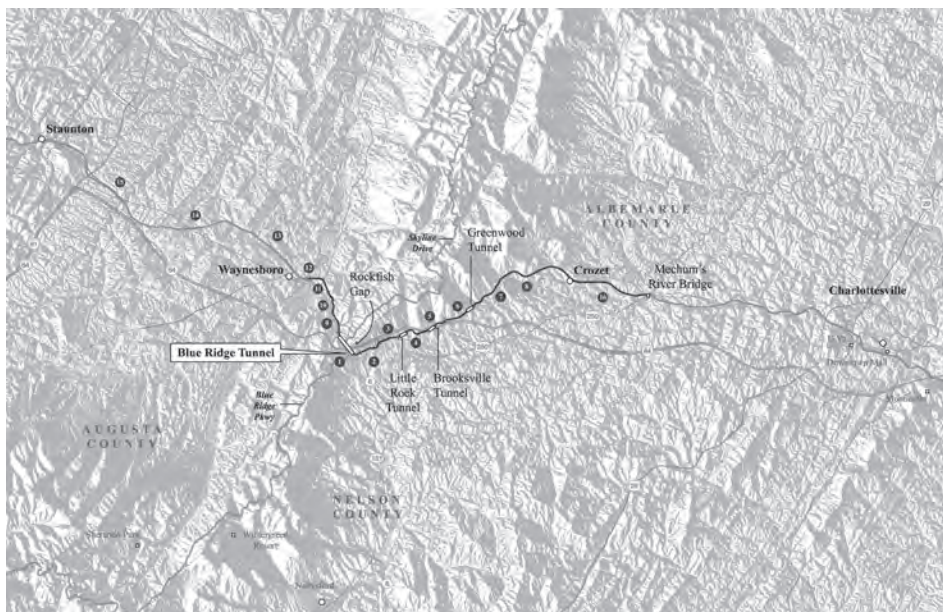
***Editor's Note:** The year 2020 will be remembered as the year that the Blue Ridge Tunnel opened to the public as a pedestrian greenway after nearly twenty years of restoration work. That makes it particularly fitting that we remember the history of those who labored to create such an engineering marvel in the mid-nineteenth century. Mary Lyons, the historian who has uncovered so much of the incredible history of the Blue Ridge Railroad and its tunnels, offers this short summary of her newly-released book on the African Americans whose labor helped built the tunnel. (Please also see the review on this book at the end of the Bulletin.)*

At least three hundred enslaved people toiled on the state-financed Blue Ridge Railroad construction between 1849 and 1859. Most of the slaveholders who rented out their labor were from Albemarle County, but Augusta County also played a role in that sorrowful history.

Sections thirteen, fourteen, and fifteen of the construction linked Waynesboro with Fishersville and then Staunton. Technically, the quasi-private Virginia Central Railroad built this portion of the line, though the state partly financed it. Claudius Crozet — chief engineer of the Blue Ridge Railroad — numbered the sections and executed the contracts. His correspondence with the Board of Public Works in Richmond proves that the contractors used slave labor on these three Augusta County sections. On sections nine, ten, and eleven, also in Augusta, the contractors used mixed race crews.¹



An early twentieth-century postcard showing the western entrance of the Blue Ridge Tunnel. (ACHS)



Blue Ridge Railroad construction sections. (Courtesy Dave Merrill)

In 1854, three enslaved young men from Albemarle—Jerry, Tom and Sam—died in accidents on the west-side tracks heading down to Waynesboro. The lead overseer had Sam buried somewhere in the town. Hannah Harden was an enslaved housekeeper who involuntarily performed domestic tasks for Sampson Pelter, a major Blue Ridge Railroad vendor. By sustaining his Waynesboro residence while he oversaw teams of horses that cleared debris from the Blue Ridge Tunnel, she indirectly supported construction of the railroad. When freed, Harden fled the unsavory Pelter and relocated to Mount Sidney. Later she moved back to Waynesboro, where she was buried in 1906. James Williams was an Albemarle County youngster whose enslaver rented his labor to the railroad in 1853. Williams moved to Augusta County after the Civil War. He worked and lived in the county for the rest of his long life and was buried in a cemetery near the Eastside Highway. Likewise, one of the enslaved men from Albemarle County who labored in the Blue Ridge Tunnel in 1854 was working in Augusta as a brick mason by 1880.²



Grave marker for Hannah Harden, Fairview Cemetery, Waynesboro, Virginia. (Courtesy Mackenzie Carlsson)



Unmarked grave depression in a cemetery previously known as Belvidere. James Williams was buried at Belvidere. (Author's collection)

The full story of slave labor on the railroad, including many more details related to Augusta County, can be found in *Slave Labor on Virginia's Blue Ridge Railroad* (The History Press, 2020). An abridged version of the preface to the book follows:

Preface

Blue Ridge Railroad Papers at the Library of Virginia are organized in archival boxes containing folders stuffed with documents. None of the folders is conveniently labeled "slavery." My decade-long mission has been to uncover details about Blue Ridge Railroad enslavement that have been scattered through the files for more than 160 years. As I read and transcribed hundreds of handwritten sheets of paper, I noted every fact about slave labor that surfaced. What I learned as of 2014 was published in *The Blue Ridge Tunnel: A Remarkable Engineering Feat in Antebellum Virginia*. More material appears in *The Virginia Blue Ridge Railroad*, published in 2015. *Slave Labor on Virginia's Blue Ridge Railroad* greatly expands the slavery content of the first two books and explores newly discovered documents.

Few specifics about the enslaved people's daily lives are known. Still, we can now gauge the nature of their grueling toil, where they labored along the line and who controlled them. Circumstances affecting Irish workers often impacted enslaved laborers. So that readers can understand this cause and effect, I trace the dizzying loop – the - loop of ever-changing contractors, wage fluctuations, and other events such as strikes and the cholera epidemic in 1854. To place slave labor in context, I have provided details about various aspects of the railroad construction. For the most part, this book is presented in chronological order, which I deem the most logical way of comprehending a public works project that proceeded along seventeen miles for ten years.

My ongoing task has been the naming of enslaved people. Thankfully,

a surviving set of state payrolls lists names of those who labored in the Blue Ridge Tunnel. Blue Ridge Railroad contracts show names of men and boys and the slaveholders who rented their labor for other parts of the line. Ledger books reveal the names of deliverymen. I harvested more names from chancery court cases, newspaper articles, receipts and other miscellaneous documents.

For the remaining slaves, I have no names at all. Most of the contractors kept their own payrolls and probably discarded them after their jobs ended. The 1850 and 1860 federal slave schedules listed slaveholders' names and the age, gender, and color of slaves—but no slave names. If a slaveholder hired out an enslaved person, the census enumerator sometimes included the name of the lessee on the same line that listed the owner. The information can be helpful for linking a slaveholder and unnamed enslaved person with a contractor's name—but only for the census years of 1850 and 1860. Slave schedules for the in-between years—most of the Blue Ridge Railroad construction period—do not exist.

After the great wall of slavery fell in 1865, full names of African Americans became part of the country's official records. In Reconstruction-era Freedmen's Bureau records, tax lists, federal censuses, marriage records, and newspapers, first and last names appeared where they should have been all along. Many of the documents are available online, making it possible to trace the lives of some—but by no means all—formerly enslaved people, their families and their communities after emancipation.

Endnotes

¹Receipts to Claudius Crozet for payments to enslavers, 1849, 1850, Blue Ridge Railroad Papers, Library of Virginia (hereafter BRP); Crozet to the Board of Public Works (hereafter BPW), May 6, 1850, BRP; contract with George Farrow for slave labor in the Blue Ridge Tunnel, December 23, 1853, BRP; contracts with Albemarle County, Va., slaveholders, January, April, July 1853, BRP; Claudius Crozet to the Board of Public Works, July 6, 1852, BRP.

²Claudius Crozet to BPW, June 3, 1854, BRP; William Sclater to John Maupin, May 26, 1854, BRP; Federal Census, Augusta County, Va., 1870; Certificate of Death for James Williams, Augusta County, Va., February 19, 1943; Federal Census, Augusta County, Va., 1880.

Remembering the Wooden Ice Box

By Donald W. Houser Jr.

***Editor's Note:** Although he lives in Texas, retired journalist Don Houser makes regular visits back to his native Augusta County, partly to reconnect with family and friends and partly to continue his forays into the history and folklore of his home. We have been pleased to publish the results of his documentation on a number of occasions in this journal. Previous articles have ranged from Native American and frontier research to stories based on interviews he has conducted in the area. We are pleased to these recollections gathered in 2019 surrounding an essential piece of furniture in the nineteenth and early twentieth century homes of the area.*

The “ice box” pre-dated electric refrigerators in the United States. They were used in many homes to keep food cool when electricity was not yet available. Some people put food in cool water inside a spring house or even lowered items into a well. But the “ice box” was designed for inside the home, and thus more convenient. The original wooden ice box came into use in the early 1800s, according to some accounts. Information on the internet says that the ice box was invented about 1840 and first saw widespread use in the New York City area for the delivery of natural ice that was cut in the winter and storied in sawdust. The first production of ice plants that made artificial ice came in the 1870s.

Ice boxes were heavy, made of oak, maple or other woods. They were well-insulated with various materials. Shelves accommodated food needing to be kept cool. A block of ice would be loaded into the unit. The ice kept the inside temperature cool, helping food last longer and not spoil. As the ice slowly melted, the water dripped into a pan kept underneath the ice box. The pan was emptied from time to time. The process of loading ice varied for different ice box models. Some were designed to load ice from the top by lifting a lid. Some were loaded from the front, by opening a door. Ice box sizes ranged from tall to short. Ice blocks seemed to average about twenty-five pounds.

In the early 1900s, an “ice box” was common in houses because many did not yet have electrical power. Prior to the end of World War II in September 1945, American manufacturers were focused on military support and the war



This unit is four feet, two inches tall, nineteen and a half inches deep and thirty-three inches wide. The board at the bottom would hinge upward to remove the water pan. All parts are original.

effort, with not much left for civilian products. After war's end, factories started creating items for booming civilian markets.

Returning military members helped create a new housing boom. As electricity became more available throughout the country, factories built electric refrigerators. Once homes had electricity, one of the first purchases, after electric lighting, was likely a new-fangled, fancy, electric refrigerator. Two popular brands (there were probably others) were Frigidaire and Kelvinator.

And many of those early refrigerators were quite dependable. My parents bought a Frigidaire in 1946 from Montgomery Ward in Staunton.

That refrigerator never failed and was constantly used until about 2005 when it was finally replaced although it still worked just fine. George Baylor, a former Churchville resident, has much the same report about his family's first refrigerator. He notes his family had one also and "it was a Frigidaire. Lasted from about 1942 until about 1992-23."

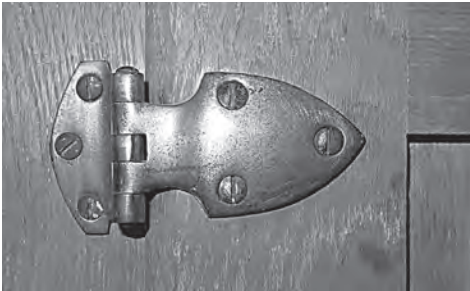
After homes had electricity, ice boxes were quickly phased out. They were stored on porches or in outbuildings, and began a transition into history. Today, few are found and few people even remember them. Many young people today may not have heard an older person refer to a refrigerator as an "ice box," but even if they have heard that reference, they are likely unaware of the origin and meaning of the term.

The wooden ice box highlighted in this article belonged to Mrs. Edna (Lambert) Kiracofe, my grandmother. She lived in Churchville, Virginia. She was a widow with five small children. They were Ruby, Annie, Margaret, Effie, and one son, called Buddy. In about 1932, they moved into a home on the road later named Bear Street. According to Effie, the ice box was obtained from Bill Moyers, a family friend who lived in nearby Lone Fountain.

The family obtained ice from the Wilson Self Service Store, nearby at the center of Churchville. Effie (Kiracofe) Pitsenbarger, recalled walking to the store to get ice. Her younger brother, Buddy, took his small wagon to help



The original latches on the top two doors. The circular hole is where a water spigot was located to withdraw cool water from the internal water tube. The spicket has been lost.



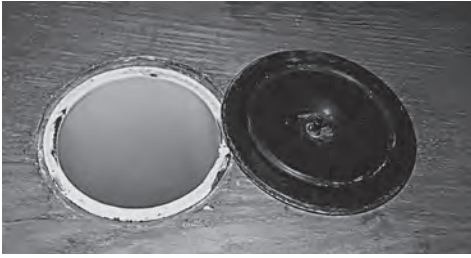
The top doors have two hinges as shown here. Apparently made of brass.



The two lower doors each have two hinges as seen here.



Inside the doors, the metal covered internal insulation can be seen.



Top of ice box showing cover for metal water tube. (above) Top with water tube cover removed. Water was poured into the tube, which extended into the ice-contained section of the ice box. The water would cool from being near the ice.

them bring the ice home since a block of ice would be too heavy for them to carry. Effie noted they even had the store chop the block into two pieces to help them load it into the ice box when they returned home.

The ice would slowly melt and the water would flow through a drain pipe and drip out the bottom into a pan on the floor beneath the ice box. The pan was emptied as appropriate. Prior to ice being completely melted, it would be time to get the wagon and take another walk to Wilson's Store.

In Staunton, some six miles away, two "ice plants" offered home ice delivery. One plant was called Cassco, located on Central Avenue. The other was just east of the underpass, along U.S. 250 east toward Waynesboro.

People who remember that era recall the "ice man" would drive through town to serve customers. His truck carried one hundred pound blocks of ice, often covered with burlap or sawdust. The ice man would chip off the amount of ice needed by the resident. Using metal tongs with sharp points, the ice deliveryman would pick up the block of ice, throw it up over their shoulders and take it to the house. He sometimes used a thick rubberized cloth to keep his back dry and partially warm.

My grandmother had electricity added to the home about December of 1940. Obviously, that was a wonderful change. The family no longer had to use kerosene lamps for light. Shortly after that, Effie purchased an electric refrigerator for the family. The ice box they had used for so many years was relegated to the covered back porch, where it remained, unused, and protected for many years.

I later obtained the ice box and carefully removed the paint. All parts are original and it should function as well today as it did nearly 100 years ago. The unit has not been refurbished beyond paint removal to reveal the original wood beneath.

Enjoy the photographs of the family ice box, as well as some other photos. In addition, there are some ice box recollections from other people from the Staunton-Waynesboro-Augusta County area.

Finally, in the recollections, you will find that a number of people mentioned the Cassco Ice Plant on Central Avenue. In the 1910-1911 Staunton City there are two ice plants mentioned. The Clem company was located on Central Avenue near Churchville Avenue and the other was at 106 W. Frederick St. The Clem ice plant was later owned by Cassco (the Central American Service Company). Many attribute the great Staunton cave-in in 1910 in which several buildings were swallowed up to the Clem ice company pumping too much water out of their wells in order to make ice.



The tapered water pipe. It would snuggle against or near a block of ice and the water would cool. The outlet is shown at the bottom of the pipe. A tube would have run over to the door, connecting to the faucet, not shown. The block of ice would have been placed on the metal plate. A drain underneath funneled water into a pan beneath the ice box.



Interior, showing water drain on bottom left, and original ice tongs on top. The metal is apparently zinc, which did not rust as tin would have. The bottom board is hinged and could be lifted up to remove a pan of water when it needed to be emptied.

The original ice tongs that went with the ice box.



The number on the lower left side of the icebox back, 0845, was probably a model number. The writing at the top is not completely legible, but what can be read says: Middle: Gibson Refrigerator Co.



The author, long ago in the late 1940s, on his Grandmother Edna L. Kiracofe's steps at her Churchville home. The ice box, painted white, is behind on the porch. Doors and hinges are visible.



Ice box memories: Most comments are from residents of the Churchville and Staunton area

Thom Jennings, Staunton



"I have a very similar one to yours. It makes a wonderful liquor cabinet! It was refinished by my brother-in-law. Ours has the original brass hardware. I did not see a manufacturers plaque but the unit is factory made. I don't want to turn it around because it has iron wheels and we have hardwood floors and I don't want to mark up the floor. The model we had, the ice had to be loaded from the top and this required you put the quarter cake of ice on a heavy cloth and it took two people to load it properly.

This photo is of another one Peggy and I bought at an auction in Franklin County back in the 1970s. Because it came from Franklin County, it may well have cooled moonshine at some time.



Meade Stewart, Staunton

This is the ice box that was used in my grandparents' home. We didn't get electricity until after WWII; I think about 1946. Our oldest son wanted it so when they had the auction we bid it in for eight hundred dollars and then spent two hundred dollars more to have it refinished. Unfortunately, antique furniture values have been in decline. Currently it is worth about five hundred dollars.

Among the things that increase the value is the catch bucket, which we have. It is in pieces and needs repair but we have all the pieces. It is a large round "tub" about six inches deep to catch the water when the ice melts. The other thing that is usually lost or broken is the glass U-joint, same principle as you have under a sink. I don't know how to highlight it in the picture but it is above the top shelf. You can see the drain tube out of the bottom of the ice storage compartment. As I said, we didn't get electricity until 1945 or 46, so what I remember was that the "REA" Rural Electrification Administration was doing a survey to know how many people would be willing to sign up for this "new-fangled service," and not everybody thought it was a good idea.

My parents were very anxious as my father had been in the Coast Guard and had traveled and so knew what a great thing electricity was. I remember the truck that delivered ice came around once a week and we got a "quarter of a cake." Our icebox was loaded from the top and it was very difficult to get the big block of ice in it, so my mother would put a heavy piece of clean cloth on the table and they would lay the ice in it with the tongs and then two people would pick up the cloth and place it in the icebox.

The guy that drove the delivery truck was scared of the bull we had even though he was in a fenced-in field so, if he saw the bull, he wouldn't deliver the ice. Without the ice you had to put the milk and butter and anything you wanted to keep cool down the well. I think it was more the fact that he didn't want to go to the extra effort to put the ice in that particular ice box than it was the bull, but this is the story I have been told.



Glenn Slack, Churchville

My father built a chest type ice box and I remember walking with mom to get ice for it from Mr. Wilson's store. It was sold at the auction when my



This latch shows a key hole, so apparently this ice box could be locked.

grandparents sold their big home and moved into the small home they built. I often wish I had it. We used a wagon too. I remember putting rocks under the ice to keep it from moving on the wagon. I don't remember how the ice was insulated at the store. Wilson's store was across Rt 42 from Pete Blair. Mr. Wilson then moved into the store where Pete Blair had his store. We couldn't buy a refrigerator right after WWII.

Betty (Kesner) Turner, Staunton

We didn't have one wish we did.

David Henderson, previously Churchville

I have seen an ice box like this.

Gordon Barlow, Buffalo Gap

I grew up with one and have owned them as collector items. Even brought a nice one back from Canada once. Not much demand today. I think there is still one for sale at the antique shop in Verona.

Harold Carwell, Staunton

My family did not have one, we were too damn poor!

Bob Campbell, Churchville

My folks moved to Churchville when I was five [1947] and I remember one at the rented house in Staunton – barely.

Johnnie (Hevener) Johnson, previously Churchville

We restored one in 1970/71. It was Ron's MBA graduation gift to himself. Still using it.

Earl Downs, Staunton

This one is a big one. We had small one back in the late 1940s. It is difficult to write about something when all the people that could refresh your memory are gone, like the old icebox we had when I was a kid, when I was about five years old. The old icebox sat on the back porch, which is where most people kept them, because they leaked. Ours was made of oak with chrome plated brass hinges and two latches used to keep the doors closed tightly. The inside was lined with zinc, because zinc did not rust. The ice door was on top. The bottom door, when open, had space large enough for milk, butter, and store-bought eggs, and other things that needed to be kept cool. Because we had our own chickens, we kept those eggs on the kitchen cabinet. You know, when you raise your own layers you don't need to keep them cold, just store-bought eggs.

On a post on the front porch was an old nail where we would hang a sign about a foot square and it had four colors on it, I can't remember the colors for certain, but I think the black square meant we didn't need any ice, the other colors meant we needed a twenty-five pound block, another color meant something else. I am not positive about this, but I think the iceman drove a little Model A Ford truck with a flat bed with a little board around the edge to keep the well-covered ice from sliding off. Those were the good ol' days. I was five years old and the only thing I had to worry about was making sure I washed my hands before supper.

George Fultz, formerly North River

The ice on mine was put in from the top. It also had a milk tank or water cooler tank on it and had a drip pan underneath. It belonged to my neighbor who was related to me. I got it from them.

Fred Pfisterer, Staunton

My grandmother had one when I lived in Philly in the 1940s. They called it an ice box and it was varnished wood with a door that opened with latch. I remember there was a zinc tray to hold the ice. There was another tray, or pan, at the bottom to catch the melted ice, then you had to empty the water from the tray. Grandmother used to put a sign in her window with the size of ice she wanted. It was a four-sided sign you could turn with different sizes on each end. The sign in the window told him how much ice to leave. It was a card a little smaller than an LP record and it had a number on each side. I think it was black and the number white but I remember if you didn't want ice, you just didn't put the sign in the window.

The iceman had a wagon with the ice packed in sawdust and he used to chop off pieces for the neighborhood kids to eat. He had a great big pair of tongs and he'd chip off the ice to the proper size then then lug it into the house and put it in the ice box. We also got our coal delivered at the house. My grandfather would open the coal window at the street side and the coal man would fit a chute into the opening and shovel the coal onto it and it would go into a bin in the cellar where it was kept.

Dennis Sutton, previously Staunton

Here are my memories—probably 1945-50. We were living in Staunton and had a square card twelve inches wide that we hung on the front porch column with the sizes block of ice needed. I believe the largest block was twenty-five pounds. When the ice truck came and the driver could see what size you wanted, he would climb on the back of the truck and with his trusty ice pick would chip off what was needed. I think the blocks from the ice plant were one hundred pounders.

All the neighborhood kids would stand at the back of the truck and catch the chips to suck on as fast as we could. There were two ice plants in Staunton one on Waynesboro Road near the underpass. It was at or near what was later known as Blue Ridge Storage. The other ice plant, called Cassco, was on Central Avenue about where the hotel is located now. The ice man would carry the ice block to the porch and then, using ice tongs, carry it to the ice box. Every family had their own ice tongs and ice picks.

I also remember the coal delivery to homes and businesses. The delivery men would carry large canvas bags with big handles to your coal bin, usually in the basement or beside your house. Most everyone used to have coal stoves in their homes. The stoves would be open at the top so you could pour the coal in with a special shaped bucket that was called a "coal bucket." It was very dirty as the coal dust would fly up in the heated air with the top open and of course you would shut the top as fast as you could.

Businesses usually had a coal chute in front with a metal cover on the sidewalk that could be opened for the delivery and the coal was dumped down the chute for furnaces or stoves.

We lived near a coal yard where the coal was delivered by rail and the special rail cars would stop on a special trestle the coal dumped from the bottom into the yard below. This was a very big business in its day, with coal cars from West Virginia coming through to points east.

From Jean (Cupp) Liggett, Churchville

I remember the old ice box that we had over at the farm when we lived with my grandparents. It was not as big or as nice as yours. If I remember cor-

rectly, it had only one big door; don't remember any smaller ones but expect it had one where they put the ice block. I remember getting ice blocks from Tom Wilson's store here on the corner in Churchville. Don't know what happened to it but expect it went with the property when Uncle Stanley bought the place around 1945. Of course, years before that we had gotten electricity and had an electric refrigerator. Many things have evolved over the years. Interesting to think back to all the things that have become obsolete and replaced (not always) with better things.

Art Kirby, previously Staunton

My family had a dark brown ice box on the front porch and it had a colored chart designating the amount of ice that was to be left by the ice man.

Dick Masincup, previously Churchville

The icebox that you have a picture of is considerably nicer than the one I remember my Aunt Hettie having. Hers was one door up and one door down. Dad kept it after the estate sale and used it for storage of odds and ends. I think it went with mom's estate sale in 2012 or so.

Margaret McDonald

We did have one at my home place. It was oak, I think, remembering the color of the wood. I remember the big porcelain dish pan that caught the drip from the chunk of ice. It sat in the hall, just outside the kitchen, likely because heat from the wood cook stove made the ice melt faster. That's all I recall; I was very young when we got electricity, closely followed by an electric refrigerator! I think ice was loaded from the top, but I was young!

Danny Wyant

We had one at the house when I was a kid but we didn't use it. By my earliest memories, we already had a refrigerator.

Ray Pitsenbarger, Churchville

I remember the one that sat on my Grandma P's porch. By that time it was only used for storage, not for keeping ice. Wish I had it now. Always played with the latches on the doors.

Linda Hunter Woods, Swoope

No, I don't remember the ice box, but I remember seeing one at grandma K's house. My neighbor has one that has been restored.

Willy William Woods, Swoope

I remember Grandma Ruby having one. Mom said grandma probably kept cookies in it. I remember it being on back porch when we was kids.

Everette R. Cease, Stuarts Draft

Yeah at one point we did have one, I can't remember the particular time. I remember it was oak wood. I was little at the time. This particular one load-

ed ice through the front door. There was an ice store up on Central Avenue, where Young Hardware was. It was called Cassco. I knew a man who worked for them, I don't recall his name. He was deaf. I don't know what happened to the ice box, but I remember it being a beautiful box. They came in different sizes, some were larger than others, and I remember that much about them. They make a nice antique item.

About everybody in those days had one. If refrigerators were available, most people couldn't afford one. Sometimes they didn't even have electricity in their homes. Remembering coal, there was a guy right there on Middlebrook Avenue, Herman Cook, who sold some coal. That was one place, I'm sure there were others. I don't know if anyone sells coal now. Staunton Creamery still had the glass bottles, I remember those bottles. They had a stopper pushed into the top.

Dixie Lee (Snyder) Hall

Yes, my Grandma and Grandpa Coffee had one. I just remember they brought ice and put it up at the top to make it cold. That's when they lived in Cornwall (Rockbridge County), near Buena Vista. I was a real little girl. I was probably age eight or ten. Then they moved to Augusta Springs. They didn't have an ice box in Augusta Springs, they had an electric refrigerator. I spent summers with them sometimes as a child. I think it was more brownish looking. I think it was brown wood. I don't remember what Grandma Snyder had. I wish I had more information on it, but I don't. I just recall them getting ice and putting it in the top.

Forrest Harris, previously Churchillville

Sure did, first of all, we had an ice box up until I was in the fourth grade. That's when we got electricity. The REA people came through Whiskey Creek and we got electricity. That would have been in 1951. We came to town on Saturday and spent the whole day. On the way home we stopped at Cassco Ice Plant there on Central Avenue. It's right there just about where Young Hardware is, on the left.

Mother would buy a twenty-five pound block of ice and they would wrap it in a burlap sack and put it on the bumper of her 1932 Plymouth coupe. It was a sack that the horse and mule feed had come in. I don't know what it cost, because I was just a kid. That's what we did. She would stop on, I think it was a Wednesday, on her way home from work (she worked at the coat factory on Central Avenue) and get another twenty-five pound block of ice. In a week's time, we used fifty pounds of ice. But she couldn't handle fifty pounds with the car. I only remember her getting twenty-five pounds, but I remember seeing a fifty-pound block. And, of course, you'd put it in the ice box and we all had

the ice picks. And if mother wanted ice for a cold drink or something, you'd take the ice pick and take off a little chunk of ice and put it in a glass, add your tea or whatever you wanted to drink.

But, oh yeah, I can remember that very vividly. Ice was loaded through the top. Then underneath they had a square thing you pulled out to get the water when the ice melted. Whatever happened to it, when we got electricity, I don't have any idea, but I can remember very vividly, especially stopping at the ice plant. My Cousin Nelly's family didn't have electricity but they had a spring and kept all the stuff in crocks in the spring house in the cold water. They were about a quarter of a mile from us.

The ice box we had was painted green. I don't have any idea where mother ever got it. I can remember going to the ice plant...mother and I moved to Staunton in December of 1953. I went to Beverley Manor Elementary School for fifth and sixth grade. For seventh grade, Robert E. Lee had just built the new wings on the old Robert E. Lee High School, so I went to Robert E. Lee High School.

We lived on Central Avenue, and rented an apartment down over the old Staunton Whiskey Store, the opposite side of the street from the Leader Office. The last building before you got to Beverley Street. That was the ABC Liquor Store in Staunton. I walked from there to Lee high. I went back to Churchville in 1957. We got electricity in 1951. That was the biggest thrill in the world, coming home and pushing this little switch up....and there was light! No more kerosene lanterns, no more kerosene lamps to do my homework by.

A person named Jordan lived up on Pine Run, now they call it Chapel Road. I lived between Whiskey Creek and Dry Branch. Anybody that lived on Dry Branch, Chapel, or the road that I lived on, didn't have electricity until 1951 when I was in fourth grade. And it was a slow progress. Back then they dug those post holes by hand. They had a shovel, the length of the wooden handle on that shovel was every bit six to eight feet long.

When I was in the first grade, the village of Churchville had electricity that was Virginia Power. But it took Shenandoah Electric Cooperative to put it out in the rural areas, up there where we lived. That old '33 Plymouth had a bumper on the front of it, she tied the ice block on but we never lost ice that I can recall, till we got home. Of course, we had those ice tongs that we picked it up with to carry it.

Mrs. Edna M. Kiracofe, Churchville

We did not have electricity, but we had to have an ice box because my sister Jean was little, we had to have ice for her. She will be eighty-one in November. I am ten years older than she was. It was bought, but I don't know where. It was well made, and it had nice hinges on it, on the door, maybe brass or copper. And a Mr. Brown would bring the ice maybe two times a week.

But whatever happened to that ice box, I just don't know. Now I wonder what happened to it, if it was sold the day of the sale, but I don't remember it sitting anywhere except in the house. Ice was loaded through a small front door. It had two doors, one that you put the ice in. It was a tall ice box. As the ice would melt, you would have cold water, and a pan on the bottom to catch the water. Ours was a light brown; it wasn't painted. I remember that the size of ice would just go in there, the big chunk of ice.

Mr. Brown got the ice from the ice plant just past the underpass, and left on Richmond Road. It was there on the left. We were all living right there where we were born and raised. It was in the Fort Defiance area that was the biggest place we lived close too. It was maybe five or six miles from where Fort Defiance High School [is now]. And Mr. Brown would come twice a week, and we would have to have the change to pay him when he put the ice in. We were always there. He would bring the ice up with ice tongs and he would put the ice in for us, he was very faithful.

To get electricity to our area, a certain number of people had to sign up for it. And daddy signed up for it and we got electricity and I remember how nice that was. I don't remember the year.

Nancy Sorrells, Greenville

My grandmother, who was born in 1905 and grew up in Staunton, used to tell me stories about when the iceman was delivering ice to houses in Staunton. All the kids would follow him around because he would chip off pieces of ice and toss them down in the street and the kids would pick them up and suck them.

Barbara (Massey) Wood, previously Churchillville

I am sure our family would have had an ice box at some time, however, once electric ones came into existence it must have been discarded. It seems everything at our house that was no longer used ended up in a ditch on the property.

Lillian (Keller) Peters, Staunton

When my parents moved to Staunton in the summer of 1927, we moved into my great-grandmother's former home. It was located at 1114 Stoneburner Street in Staunton, Va. I was six months old. One of the first memories I have is an icebox that stood on a closed-in back porch. It had a large door on the right side that held all of the items that needed to be kept cool. It covered the height of the whole icebox. On the left side there were two doors, each half as large as the left side. The top shelf held the ice and the bottom shelf held the drippings.

Ice was delivered by an ice wagon driven by Mr. John Jackson. This delivery was made about every other day and the desired amount was on a card posted either in your window or hung somewhere on your porch. I think the

cost was twenty-five cents for a fifty-pound cube and this lasted maybe three days. One day my Mother heard the icebox door opening and closing. Looking for the cause of the noise, she found that my two brothers were taking the water and making mud pies. This soon ceased.

On another occasion, my oldest brother undertook to hang onto the back of Mr. Jackson's truck and ride down the corner to the street. Fun, fun, fun. However, my youngest brother undertook to do the same but somehow he couldn't get his feet off the street. Consequently, his knees drug all the way to the corner. Needless to say, the knees were badly skinned and Momma covered them with iodine. That stopped this trick, however, but there were many other performances by those brothers.

One of the refrigerator companies handed out a toy size 'fridge when someone had purchased the full-size unit. These must be a rare find today.

The Last Page

A special thank you to everyone who contributed their thoughts, memories, and photos for this ice box research. Your input made this research so much more interesting, and I learned from you.

The ice box era is fading into non-memory. If you remember ice boxes, this may jog your memories. If you are unfamiliar with ice box history, it can be an education.

I found that memories of an ice box depended greatly on the generations I interviewed. People in their seventies, eighties, and nineties often said they remembered as children having an ice box used in their homes. People in their sixties and seventies sometimes had seen an ice box, perhaps sitting on a back porch and used for odds and ends, or stored in an outbuilding. They had not seen one being used.

People younger than their sixties tended to not know anything about an ice box, didn't recall ever seeing one, and/or had no idea they even existed. If they had even heard the term "ice box" it meant their electric refrigerator.

Of course, some people today have refurbished ice boxes in their homes. Some were from older family members and some were purchased as an antique. Finally, in addition to ice box comments, people sometimes mentioned the old "pie safes" that were popular at about the same time, and earlier. It would make a good story, but I leave the "pie safe" research to someone else. Any errors in this research are mine alone.

The Fruits of her Labor Staunton's Leta Watts Gibbs and the Augusta Garden Club

By Logan M. Olszewski

Editor's Note: *Logan Olszewski is a recent graduate of James Madison University with a B.A. in history with a concentration in public history and a minor in Medieval and Renaissance Studies. As part of her degree requirements, she undertook an internship with the Augusta County Historical Society to learn more about small archives repositories. As an intern, she was able to help process and digitize a collection of scrapbooks made by Staunton's Leta Watts Gibbs that are located in the historical society's archives as well as research Gibbs's life and role in women's garden clubs. This paper was written to present the culmination of her findings and celebrate the impact that Leta Watts Gibbs had on her community.*

Before 1868, the idea of forming a women's club in a local community was unheard of, but by the turn of the twentieth century, women across the nation began to form clubs and rewrite their place in society. A Staunton-born woman, Leta Watts Gibbs, was able to use her community's women's garden club, the Augusta Garden Club, to advance through society and earn an individual place in her community that was separate from the identity of her husband. As a part of my history internship as a student of James Madison University, I processed and digitized a collection of scrapbooks that were donated to the Augusta County Historical Society detailing the life of Leta Watts Gibbs. After studying her career as a gardener (especially roses), it became clear that the women's club movement provided women, such as Leta Watts Gibbs, the opportunity to contribute to the preservation of their communities by forming women's clubs and later women's garden clubs in the early twentieth century.

Born out of religious societies, the women's club movement originates from the mental and spiritual refuge that religious sisterhoods have provided for women since the fifth century. Over time women's monasteries evolved into a place where nuns had a vocation. Nuns became nurses, teachers, and caretakers of the poor and orphaned. Using memory as a means to learn to access manuscripts after years of labor, these women took

advantage of their opportunities to become educated and do more for their communities. The club movement followed a similar path with women looking for a way to cultivate their talents outside of homemaking. Before long, clubs focused on discussing social and civic issues, networking, and creating change through volunteering.¹

The second day of May 1868 was the first meeting of a group of women who would go on to launch a movement that would spread across the nation. Before this first gathering, the Press Club of New York gave Charles Dickens an invite to a dinner party while he was on his reading tour. Mrs. Jane “Jennie June” Croly and a few other women applied for tickets to the Press Club’s dinner. The club rudely denied them access to the event because, as women, they were unwelcome. The women then decided to take matters into their own hands with the goal of “supply[ing] the want of unity and secular organizations among women.”² Mrs. Botta, Mrs. C.B. Willbour, Mrs. H.M. Field, and Miss Kate Field all met with Croly that May to do something that had been, heretofore, unthinkable—form a women’s club. After rejecting names for their new group such as the Blue Stocking Club, the women collectively settled on the name Sorosis for its “full, appropriate signification, its unhackneyed character, and sweet sound.”³

The word, derived from the Latin word *soror*, meaning sisterhood. Before the founding of Sorosis, the term “women’s club” did not exist. Other clubs began to form soon after as a result, and soon women throughout the United States had their own clubs and associations. Many of these notable clubs focused on literature, reform, preservation, and beautification. With Croly’s goal of bringing not just one type of women together, but all women, she held a conference in April 1890 that ratified the General Federation of Women’s Clubs.

Women’s garden clubs were one of the many varieties of associations that spread with the movement. Many horticulture and botany clubs did not allow women to join, so women formed their own communities where they could express their “interest in nature and beauty.”⁴



*Banner of Sorosis Women's Club
(From Mrs. J.C. Croly, The History of the Women's Club Movement in America, 34.)*

The first United States garden club, formed in January 1891, as the Ladies Garden Club of Athens in Athens, Georgia, led by the “guiding spirit of the organization,”⁵ Mrs. E.K. Lumpkin. Over the next few decades, dozens of garden clubs began sprouting up all over the country. In 1913, Elizabeth Price Martin, founder of the Garden Club of Pennsylvania, created a letter-writing campaign to bring together women’s garden clubs from all across the nation and destigmatize the idea that organizations would limit their independence and “kill the joy of living.” Holding annual meetings, “The Garden Guild” was born and would eventually transition into the Garden Club of America. Twelve clubs initially made up the association:

1. Amateur Gardeners’ Club, Maryland
2. Bedford Garden Club, New York
3. Gardeners, Pennsylvania
4. Garden Spring Valley Garden Club, Maryland
5. Lake Forest Garden Club, Illinois
6. Garden Club of Michigan
7. Garden Club of Orange and Dutchess Counties, New York
8. Garden Club of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
9. Garden Club of Princeton, New Jersey
10. Short Hills Garden Club, New Jersey
11. Warrenton Garden Club, Virginia
12. The Weeders, Pennsylvania

The Garden Club of America’s main office was in New York City. Led by the first president of the association, Elizabeth Price Martin, the group set the following policy: “The objects of this association shall be: to stimulate the knowledge and love of gardening among amateurs; to share the advantages of association through conference and correspondence, in this country and abroad; to aid in the protection of native plants and birds; and to encourage civic planting.”⁶

The Augusta Garden Club, founded in 1919 and one of the founding members of the Garden Club of Virginia, joined the Garden Club of America in 1927. The club’s purpose has remained constant as it hopes to “stimulate the knowledge and love of gardening.”⁷ The club completed many preservation and conservation projects while Gibbs was a member, including: Ramsey’s Draft Nature Trail, Gardens at the former King’s Daughters’ Hospital, and landscaping and memorial garden at the former Staunton Public Library.⁸ That library, known as the Fannie Bayly King Library, was located in the building that is now part of the Grace Christian School between Coalter and Market streets. King, a suffragist, was a contemporary of Gibbs.

According to a newspaper article from Danville, Virginia, that was quoted in the history of the Augusta Garden Club, the true purpose of the club lies in “raising the dignity of gardening, improving the products of gardens, reviving an almost lost art, and, above all, the preservation of the faded glories of the Old South where horticulture was a finer science than it is today.”⁹

Other than showing off their flowers at garden shows and meetings, the women in garden clubs focused on historic preservation jobs and the restoration of “historical landmarks gardens and grounds” as projects that would create a better environment for their communities. The Garden Club of Virginia was formed in 1920 by Mrs. Thomas S. Wheelwright, President of the James River Garden Club. The purpose of bringing Virginia’s garden clubs together was to branch out from only gardening at home and invest in beautifying the whole of Virginia and conserving its natural beauty.

The first restoration project that the club took on was the ambitious restoration of the Kenmore Estate, the home of George Washington’s sister Betty Lewis, in 1929. The Garden Club of Virginia was also able to raise money through its large garden shows, such as the one in 1927 that raised \$7,000 toward the restoration of Thomas Jefferson’s Monticello gardens. Garden clubs were able to realize the potential in historic areas and create a beautiful landscape for those who visited them.¹⁰

Born May 25, 1884, Leta Watts was reared in Staunton, Virginia.¹¹ Her father, Newton Clarke Watts, was well known in the community as the president of the Clifton Forge Mutual Telephone Company.¹² Her mother, Bettie Watts, was a homemaker who wrote poems dedicated to herself and her family. Leta was middle child of three girls, her sisters being Alma Lula Watts and Mary D. Watts. While Leta’s connection to the man who brought the first telephone lines to Augusta County garnered her a higher place in society, she still experienced a typical childhood. Filling out seventeen scrapbooks, Leta recorded her life and the lives of those close to her by saving in her books printed advertisements, pictures, and newspaper articles. In the first scrapbook, she collected magazine advertisements for the newest Singer sewing machines, labels of her favorite foods, and postcards of places around the world and bible quotes. Many of the homemaking advertisements were marketing the newest snacks, writing tablets, and sewing machines geared toward young women.¹³

Her second scrapbook picks up when Leta was an adult woman of twenty-six. In 1910, her engagement to William Wayt Gibbs III was announced by her soon to be parents-in-law. The couple held a quiet wedding at their home in Staunton, Wesleyan, on March 16, 1910. The two welcomed their son, William Wayt Gibbs IV, into their family on December twenty-sixth of the same year.

Despite the lack of documentation about William IV's childhood, it is known that he began his adulthood working for the Waynesboro Telephone Company and also married Dorothy Morriss in May of 1935. Drafted into the U.S. Army on October 30, 1940, Leta's son, William Wayt Gibbs IV, was sent to Camp Lee in 1942, where Leta was able to visit him before he was sent to England in July of 1942.¹⁴ After being ill for some weeks, Leta's Husband, William Wayt Gibbs III, died on June 24, 1944, at the age of sixty-six. Although there is not a lot about her husband in her scrapbooks, William III was known for popularizing the game of chess in Virginia while acting as the president of the Clifton Forge and Waynesboro Telephone Companies.¹⁵ As Leta filled pages of her scrapbooks with newspaper obituaries and photos of his funeral service, it is clear that the community joined the Gibbs family in their grief over the loss of William Wayt III. Following his death, he was laid to rest on June 26, 1944. Photos show his grave covered in hundreds of flowers.¹⁶

Leta's first appearance as a member of the Augusta Garden Club was in June of 1927 at the Clifton Forge Garden Club's Semi-Annual Flower Show.¹⁷ Once she began competing, it became evident that Leta held a talent for flowers, particularly roses. Leta's talent for roses earned her a spot as an elected trustee of the American Rose Society.¹⁸ Ten years after her first competition, the Garden Club of Virginia elected Leta the Rosarian and Chairman of Horticulture, and the Augusta Garden Club elected her the second vice-president.¹⁹ Due to her rapidly emerging success, Leta was elected the president of the Augusta Garden Club from 1941 to 1942, to the board of directors of the Garden Club of America in March 1942, and the Treasurer of the Garden Club of Virginia in May 1942.²⁰ As an officer at the Garden Club of Virginia, Gibbs Hill, her family home and garden, became a test garden where she could experiment with growing in winter weather and cultivating many different types of flowers to show.²¹

As her grandchildren and great-nieces and nephews were born, Leta began shifting from competing to judging flower shows. In May of 1964, for



The funeral plot of William Wayt Gibbs III. Leta Watts Gibbs Scrapbooks, Volume 2, 72.



Leta Watts Gibbs and Other Members of The Garden Club of Virginia at a Flower Show Hosted by the Garden Club of Norfolk. Mrs. H. Blount Hunter (left), Mrs. Louis Dirbell (middle), and Mrs. W.W. Gibbs (right). (Leta Watts Gibbs Scrapbooks, Volume 2, 72)

reasons unknown, Gibbs received a letter from the Garden Club of Virginia confirming her resignation from her position within the state's garden club.²²

Unfortunately, in a letter to the American Daffodil Society sent in December of 1967, Leta explains that she can no longer be an active charter member as she can no longer garden.²³ Although the exact reasons are unknown, it can be assumed that old age is the reason she could no longer participate, as she was eighty-four years old. After this letter, the only news in her scrapbooks regarding garden clubs are updates regarding the well-being of the Augusta Garden Club.

For her many years competing in flower shows, Leta kept newspaper clippings detailing the awards that she won for her flowers, most notably her roses. While she likely competed in other flower shows, the following is a list of every flower show that Leta won awards for that were included in her scrapbook collection:

June 1927: Semi-Annual Flower Show hosted by The Clifton Forge Garden Club²⁴

- Best Collection Ragged Robins - First place and Second place
- Best Specimen Nasturtiums - First place
- Best Specimen Rose - Second place and Third place
- Best Collection Nasturtiums - Third place

Sept 18, 1928: Semi-Annual Flower Show hosted by The Clifton Forge Garden Club²⁵

- Best Artistic Arrangement in glass - First place and Third place
- Best Decorative Dahlia Collection - First place
- Best Red Dahlias Collection - First place
- Best Roses Collection - First place
- Best Zinnias Specimen - Second place

October 7, 1931: The Garden Club of Virginia Regional Flower Show²⁶

- Roses in Silver Container - First place
- Roses Specimen - Second place

September 6, 1932: Flower Show at Staunton Fair hosted by the Augusta Garden Club²⁷

- Best collection of roses - First place
- Best specimen single rose - First place
- Collection of Zinnias - Second place
- Specimen Zinnia - Second place

The Garden Club of Virginia

OFFICERS

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First Vice-President
104 N. Wilton Road
Richmond 21, Virginia

Mrs. Wyatt A. Williams
Second Vice-President
Little Yaiton
Orange, Virginia

Mrs. George H. Flowers, Jr.
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11 Oak Lane
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East Belmont
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May 9, 1964

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Mrs. Lewis M. Walker, Jr.
Milton
Route 2, Box 170
Petersburg, Virginia

Mrs. W. Wayt Gibbs, Honorary President
The Augusta Garden Club
Staunton, Virginia

Dear, dear Leta,

I hear it is now official and the Augusta Garden Club is the luckiest of all the clubs! Only wish you lived in Gloucester! I knew this was in the offing because, believe, they just couldn't bear to let you go. I was so touched at the tributes to you, at the real emotion displayed at the meeting I attended. Thank you for accepting this and making not only your own club happy but the outgoing president of the GCV also! I just couldn't tolerate a Register without your beloved name in it.

Lucie and I so hoped we could get to see you when we were in Staunton but what a day! The final Restoration Meeting for two years, ending up U. of Va., new project, exciting new plans of all sorts. Luncheon wasn't until nearly 3:00, then an inspection of The Birthplace, then just time to powder the nose before the cocktail party and the Martins and Rhoads had a dinner engagement in Charlottesville which we postponed until 8:30. But it was sad to be so near you and yet not be able to see you.

Did you know that our sweet Fran Nelson accepted the Rose Test Garden? I know she will lean heavily for advice from you and she will get it.

On the last lap now with the tape in sight. I have loved it - every minute - but I must admit that this inch-thick itinerary here on my desk is very tempting!

Love, dear Leta.



Letter wishing Leta luck with the Augusta Garden Club as she leaves her position as Treasurer of Garden Club of Virginia. (Leta Watts Gibbs Scrapbooks, Volume 2, 44)

June 15, 1935: The American Rose Society and The Garden Club of Virginia Cup²⁸

Silver medal

April 17, 1936: Fifth Annual Narcissus Show of The Garden Club of Virginia²⁹

Runner-up in the competition for the sweepstakes cup

April 1938: Seventh Annual Narcissus Show of The Garden Club of Virginia³⁰

Silver Cup, in memory of Mrs. Floyd Garris of Aldie, by the
Fauquier-Loudoun Garden Club

October 1-2, 1938: Sixth Annual Exhibit of the Potomac Rose Society³¹

Other Red Rose Varieties - First place

Individual Red Roses - Fifth place

October 18, 1938: Augusta Garden Club's Fall Flower Arrangement Show³²

Arrangement of Fall Flowers in Pottery Container - First place

Arrangement of Pairs of Vases (over 10 inches) - First place

Arrangement of Roses in any Container - First place

Arrangement of October Bloom in Any Container - Second place

Arrangement of Roses in any Container (by Grower) - Second place

Arrangement of Winter Bouquet - Honorable Mention

May 3, 1939: Tulip Show at Woodrow Wilson Birthplace hosted by the Augusta Garden Club³³

Arrangement with pink predominating, any spring flowers, any container
- First place

Arrangement with purple predominating, any spring flowers, any container
- First place

Arrangement with white predominating, any spring flowers, any container
- First place

Arrangement with yellow predominating, any spring flowers, any container
- First place

Early Bearded Iris, single specimen, named and labeled - First place

Perennials, any variety, three stalks, named and labeled - First place

Single Specimen Yellow Darwin Tulip, named and labeled - First place

Single specimen shaded Darwin tulip, named and labeled - Second place

Specimen branch hybrid Lilacs, named and labeled - Second place

May 21, 1940: Augusta Garden Club Spring Flower Show³⁴

Bearded Iris, named and labeled, class 45 - First place

Bearded Iris, named and labeled, class 46 - First place

Bearded Iris, named and labeled, class 47 - First place

Bearded Iris, named and labeled, class 50 - First place

Collection of Flowering Shrubs - First place

Bearded Iris, named and labeled, class 43 - Second Place

Specimen Flowering Shrubs - Second place

July 19, 1940: Augusta Garden Club Flower Show at "Falcroft"³⁵

Arrangements of Flowers with Hemerocallis, yellow - First place

Arrangement without Hemerocallis, blue - First place

Best Rose Collection, blue - First place

Collection of Hemerocallis, blue, twenty-six varieties shown - First place

Specimen Hemerocallis, blue - First place

April 11, 1942: Eleventh Narcissus Show of The Garden Club of Virginia³⁶

Barrii, yellow perianth, with or without red coloring on cup, vase of

three stalks, one variety - First place
 Incomparabilis, bi-color with white or whitish perianth, self-yellow
 red-stained, or red cup, single specimen - First place
 Incomparabilis, vase of three stalks, one variety - First place
 Special, three varieties, one stalk each, raised by specified
 growers, First place
 Trumpets, vase of three stalks, one variety - First place
 Trumpets, collection one stalk of each variety - First place
 Incomparabilis, bi-color with white or whitish perianth, self-yellow
 red-stained, or red cup, vase of three stalks, one variety - Second place
 Incomparabilis, single specimen - Second place
 Barrii, yellow perianth, with or without red coloring on cup,
 single specimen - Third place
 Incomparabilis, collection, one stalk of each variety - Third place
 Special, Collection of Incomparabilis, twelve varieties, one stalk
 each, six Division 2A and six Division 2B, shown without
 foliage - Third place

April 4, 1946: Twelfth Annual Narcissus Show of The Garden Club of Virginia³⁷

Runner-up in the Sweepstakes Competition

April 16, 1949: Fifteenth Annual Narcissus Show of The Garden Club of Virginia³⁸

Cyclamineus Hybrids, single, vase - First place
 Four Varieties - First place
 Five Stalks - First place
 Incomparabilis, vase - First place
 Exhibit 2 - First place
 Leedsii, A single - First place
 Leedsii, collection - First place
 Parent and Child - First place
 Exhibit 3 - Second place
 Incomparabilis, collection - Second place
 Triandus Hybrids, A single - Second place
 Trumpets, collection - Second place
 Leedsii, B single - Third place
 Trumpets, yellow, single specimen - Third place
 Trumpets, bi-color, single specimen - Third place
 Trumpets, vase - Third place

June 17, 1949: Augusta Garden Club Flower Show³⁹

Roses in Silver - Second place
 Roses in Glass - Third place

December 21, 1951: The Christmas Meeting of The Augusta Garden Club⁴⁰

Blue Ribbon

Gibbs's success in her garden clubs allowed her to share her passion with other women all over the state. Once elected Rosarian and Chairman of Horticulture for the Garden Club of Virginia, she began to give lectures to the Clifton Forge Garden Club, Augusta Garden Club, Natural Bridge Garden Club, and in an unknown location in Monterey, Virginia.⁴¹ Known as someone

“prominent throughout Virginia as an authority on roses and their culture,” she often brought colored photo slides along with her to show everyone how her garden had grown to become “the largest rose test garden owned by a member of the Garden Club of Virginia.”⁴²

Just as with many other garden clubs across the nation, Leta Watts Gibbs’ experience in both the Augusta Garden Club and the Garden Club of Virginia allowed her to volunteer with and manage preservation projects all over the state of Virginia. One of Gibbs’s first preservation projects was working with the Garden Club of Virginia to restore the Victorian garden at Woodrow Wilson’s birthplace in 1933. The club rejuvenated the colonial revival bowknot garden with two terraces and boxwood-lined bowknot beds.⁴³ However, her first project of any sort was with the Augusta Garden Club when it sponsored a nature trail in Ramsey’s Draft at the base of the Shenandoah Mountain in 1950. Although the project was small, members of the club were able to plant a plot of flowers along the path, beautifying the trail for all visitors to enjoy.

Another project that the Augusta Garden Club undertook while Gibbs was a member was the restoration of the garden at the Staunton Public Library in 1961. Gibbs was a member of the Library Planting Committee working on the beautification of the library grounds. Stanley Abbot, the renowned architect who drew plans for the preservation of Colonial Williamsburg, planned the project. The community hoped that by adding new trees and flowers, it would contribute “to the landscape appearance of the city building”⁴⁴ while keeping some of the original trees.

Among the most important preservation projects that Leta Watts Gibbs accomplished through her involvement with the Garden Club was the



“The Clifton Forge Garden club had its guest speaker last week.” Miss Elizabeth Rawlinson (front), Mrs. W.W. Gibbs (second row, left), Mrs. L.F. Pendleton (second row, right), Mrs. L.F. Higgins (back row, left), Mrs. A.C. Ford (back row, middle), and Mrs. E.R. Massie (back row, right). (Leta Watts Gibbs Scrapbooks, Volume 2, 41)



Illustration of Woodrow Wilson's Birthplace and Garden on the cover of a booklet detailing the home's history.

Mrs. Joseph R. Nutt Jr. of the Augusta Garden Club inspecting a mulberry sprout growing near a stump of one of the library's original trees.



Pamphlet of the Augusta Garden Club's "A Day in the Garden."

fundraiser for the King's Daughters' Hospital Building Fund. On February 20, 1947, the Augusta Garden Club gathered to discuss how best its members could contribute. The club decided to sponsor the event "A Day in the Garden," during which Gibbs would organize a flower show and a tour of her gardens on Gibbs Hill. A French market-style wagon would be holding flowers and food delicacies would be sold nearby. Booths would also be set up to sell gardening accessories and the Staunton Military Academy band would play for a couple of hours.⁴⁵ The event was a success, and the club was able to raise enough money to contribute to the hospital building fund.

Gibbs was elected chairman of the hospital garden committee, where she was able to subscribe \$1,500 for a flower room in the new building, plan all of the garden layouts, and complete the hospital's planting grounds on January 25, 1955, only four years after the opening of the hospital.⁴⁶

The garden clubs that Leta Watts Gibbs joined throughout her life were products of the women's club movement. By competing in and judging flower shows, testing new gardening techniques, and managing preservation projects, she was able to form a position in her community outside of her husband and household duties. Leta Watts Gibbs passed away on June 21, 1970,⁴⁷ leaving behind a legacy that has allowed the Augusta Garden Club, The Garden Club of Virginia, and The Garden Club of America to continue to contribute to both the nation's beauty and the advancement of women.

Endnotes

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- ¹⁶*Ibid.*
- ¹⁷*Ibid.*, 13.
- ¹⁸*Ibid.*, 16.
- ¹⁹*Ibid.*, 41, 52.
- ²⁰*Ibid.*, 63.
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- ²⁴Leta Watts Gibbs Scrapbooks, Volume 2, 13.
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- ²⁶*Ibid.*
- ²⁷*Ibid.*, 15.
- ²⁸*Ibid.*, 16.
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- ³⁰Leta Watts Gibbs Scrapbooks, Volume 2, 41.
- ³¹*Ibid.*, 43.
- ³²*Ibid.*, 43.
- ³³*Ibid.*, 47.
- ³⁴*Ibid.*, 51.
- ³⁵*Ibid.*, 52.
- ³⁶*Ibid.*, 59.
- ³⁷*Ibid.*, 109.
- ³⁸*Ibid.*, 118.
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Hemp and Flax in Colonial America

By Ben Swenson

***Editor's Note:** Readers will enjoy this package of articles and images on hemp (cannabis) by Ben Swenson, Mark Hutter, and Nancy Sorrells. It will hopefully lead to a better understanding as to the importance of this plant in the colonial economy of Augusta County, Virginia, and America. Swenson's article and the sidebar by Colonial Williamsburg's master tailor Mark Hutter, are reprinted with permission from the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation.*

Colonial planters gushed of the crop's promise. Col. William Byrd II called its cultivation "the Darling of all my Projects." Robert Beverley predicted the plant "will be of the greatest consequence to us." Thomas Jefferson directed that "an acre of the best ground" at his Poplar Forest estate be kept for a permanent patch of the stuff. The object of their affection was not tobacco, the ubiquitous "Indian weed" responsible for the fortunes and failings of so many eighteenth-century Americans. This was a weed of a different sort, one that would likewise collect healthy shares of praise and scorn.

Hemp was well known to colonial Americans, but not for the same reason the plant would make headlines more than two centuries later. Today's debate, which centers on the legalization of marijuana, is not the first time that cannabis has captured the attention of the nation. For thousands of eighteenth-century Americans, from humble, middling farmers to large planters like Byrd, Beverley and Jefferson, the ability of cannabis to intoxicate was incidental. They were instead interested in a trait they considered far more valuable. Hemp fibers are exceptionally strong and durable, and in an era before science could do better, that made this a commodity worth growing.

Hemp was among the first plants humans cultivated. Ancient Chinese pottery bearing impressions from hemp rope suggest its use five thousand years ago and possibly more than twice that long. Credit for this long-term relationship belongs to hemp's many applications: thread, cordage, cloth, paper, food and, yes, intoxication.



This woodcut from an almanac shows fiber production on an American farm. The man just outside the barn is using a break to crush the stems of a fiber plant – either flax or hemp – in order to remove the plants’ outer husk. The man standing in the open barn door area is working on the next stage of fiber processing, which is called scutching.

When humans took to the seas, every sizable vessel required lines and sailcloth capable of withstanding all that open water could muster. Hemp proved the best fit. Historian Martin Booth estimated the English fleet that defeated the Spanish Armada in 1588 donned ten thousand acres of cultivated hemp. The emerging prominence of the English navy was the chief reason English farmers, and later their American cousins, were required to devote a share of their acreage to hemp. The Virginia Assembly in 1632 ordered “that every planter as soone as he may, provide seede of flaxe and hempe and sowe the same.”

Flax too created useful filament, but fibers from flax—a shorter, more slender plant—tended to be finer and they were usually made into clothes rather than cordage. Hemp was generally preferred for cordage, though the two products were often used interchangeably and sometimes even woven together into the same textile.

Hemp had the added advantage of returning at least twice as much yield in fibers per acre than flax under ideal growing and processing conditions. Farmers cultivated hemp throughout the American colonies, from the southern reaches of North America to New England and Canada, since it grows in all but the coldest climates. But in the eighteenth century, Virginians and Marylanders grew the most.

There was an indigenous species known to Native Americans called Indian hemp (*Apocynum cannabinum*), but the cannabis most often cultivated in the colonies was an introduced species, *Cannabis sativa*.

Along with its long, sturdy fibers, cannabis has another remarkable

trait: it synthesizes a chemical called delta-9-tetrahydrocannabinol, or THC. THC is a psychoactive compound found at highest levels in a resin cannabis produces. Cannabis has separate male and female organs on different plants, and the unfertilized flowers of hemp's female plants contain the most resin. By themselves, the female flowers are what we today call marijuana. The resin can also be collected and formed into cakes known as hashish. Smoking or eating marijuana or hashish induces a hallucinogenic high.

Ancient records refer to people partaking in ritualistic and recreational intoxication from hemp at least 2,600 years ago. People also ingested hemp as a painkiller capable of treating the symptoms of numerous debilitating conditions including rheumatism and gout.

Though the hallucinogenic properties were well known by the eighteenth century, there's no evidence to suggest that colonial Americans were taking advantage of this mind-altering quirk of the hemp they grew.

For starters, farmers sowed their hemp crop in tight patches, creating individual plants that were tall by design. Byrd boasted that his hemp was "twice as long as that which comes from the East Country." A traveler to Virginia's Shenandoah Valley observed hemp that was fourteen feet tall. Hemp in tight clusters bears few branches, and therefore lacks the profusion of female flowers where the concentration of THC is the greatest.

What's more, no sources from eighteenth-century America refer to the ingestion of what we call today marijuana or hashish. There have been attempts to interpret some hemp references to suggest that obtaining a high was common, but those explanations fall flat when placed in the proper context.

For instance, John Adams (writing incognito as Humphrey Ploughjogger) once penned that "we shall by and by want a world of hemp more for our own consumshon" and George Washington lamented not separating his male and female hemp plants.

Aha! Founding smokers, right? Not so fast. Adams's quote actually was a satirical take on hanging political dissidents by hemp rope, while Washington's was an acknowledgment of an agricultural slip up, as hemp gone to seed (after the male pollen fertilizes the female flower) produces coarser, less valuable fibers. Many eighteenth-century Americans enjoyed recreational intoxication now and again, but they consumed alcohol for that, not THC. Neither was hemp used all that much for medicine; the seeds (which contain no appreciable amounts of THC) were boiled in milk to treat coughs, but if ailing colonists needed a potent painkiller, heavier ammunition, notably opium, was available without much effort.

Even if early Americans were well aware of hemp's psychoactive and

medicinal qualities, those features were hardly a priority. Clothes, ropes, bed ticking, and sacks were more immediate concerns—all the workaday hardware that enabled a decent living in a pre-industrial world. Hemp was good to have around for the manufacture of these items, but cash crops, particularly tobacco in Tidewater Virginia and Maryland, remained the mainstays.

A frustrating feature of eighteenth-century agriculture was price fluctuations that could leave yeomen in the red. The hemp market did not suffer gluts like tobacco. “I am so out of Humour with Tobacco (which is made in too great a Quantity) that I have turn’d great part of my force towards Hemp,” wrote Byrd.

Jefferson noted that hemp “is abundantly productive and will grow forever on the same spot,” unlike tobacco, which depletes soil nutrients. Markets for hemp abounded, too. Not only could it be made into textiles for one’s own use, but there were so many willing buyers in northeastern cities that Americans exported little to England.

Still, the long transformation from tiny seed to finished product was no small task. According to a 1799 treatise on hemp production, “two autumnal plowings; and the like plowings with harrowings in the next spring” were best practices for the soil preparation alone. Seeds were scattered by hand after which shoots would “rapidly cover and shelter the whole ground,” akin to the spacing on a modern stand of bamboo.

After thirteen weeks or so, the plants had to be cut or pulled from the ground and tied in large bundles to dry. Retting or rotting occurred by immersing the stalks in water or by allowing natural moisture, in the form of rain or dew, to fall on them, loosening the useful strands from the woody bark and interior. After another period of drying, laborers used a hemp brake, a wooden tool that is shaped like the jaws of a crocodile, to crack and separate the unwanted flakes of waste from the long fibers.

Breaking was a repetitive, tiring task. For all his praise of hemp, Byrd noted “one difficulty that discomfits me a little, an[d] that is the great Labour it requires in the breaking it.” Said Jefferson: “[B]reaking and beating it, which has always been done by hand, is so slow, so laborious, and so much complained of by our laborers.” This was after he had invented his own hemp brake in an effort to ease the chore.

Some of the refuse fell free from the lint during breaking but not all. The fibers had to be scutched (beaten and scraped), then heckled (combed), to shed the hangers-on still entangled in the long strands. Only then could the hemp be spun into thread and twisted or woven into cordage or textiles.

The difficulty of processing hemp did not deter its cultivation. In



Hemp in Williamsburg: Many objects used in the Historic Area are still made of hemp and flax material today. A few were borrowed to show. You can see raw flax – which came from the local gardener, the George Washington tent marquee provided by our Milliner, a bucket handle made of a hemp rope – on loan from the Peyton Randolph house, and an assortment of ropes – all collected from the printer, book-binder, and weaver.

the spring of 1729, Byrd sowed ninety bushels of hemp seed, optimistic that a bumper crop would result. That was enough for thirty-six acres or more. Most Tidewater planters grew a fraction of that, keeping much of their acreage in tobacco and other cash crops.

In Virginia's Piedmont and Shenandoah Valley regions, where tobacco did not grow so well, hemp became a staple. By the middle of the eighteenth century, Virginians had twelve thousand acres cultivated in hemp, more than a quarter of the forty-five thousand acres they had in tobacco.

As the relationship between Britain and the American colonies soured, hemp gained favor to compensate for shortages caused by boycotts of British imports. Homespun clothing, including that made out of hemp, became a hallmark the American cause. *The Virginia Gazette* in April 1767 printed front-page instructions for growing hemp. The freeholders of Henrico County, Va., were among the chorus of voices who resolved in 1774 "that the raising of Sheep, Hemp, and Flax ought to be encouraged," and "that to be clothed in Manufactures fabricated in the Colony ought to be considered as a Badge of Distinction and Respect, and true Patriotism."

Virginians were permitted to pay taxes in hemp, along with other cash crops. Financial incentives like this had precedent; both the Virginia Assembly and the British Parliament provided bounties for growing hemp throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in an effort to cut reliance on foreign imports, especially from Russia, where the quantity and quality of the crop were unmatched the world over.

With the onset of fighting in 1775, Americans' need for hemp became urgent. While hemp products were useful for ground troops, naval forces were paralyzed without them. There were eleven state-sponsored fleets during the American Revolution, as well as the Continental Navy, and every single ship needed ropes and sails. A single vessel in the Virginia Navy called the "Brigantine Liberty," for example, required more than two miles of cordage.

The surge in demand for hemp caused prices to skyrocket, in some cases to three times the peacetime averages, and many farmers weren't going to let that opportunity pass. Wartime Virginia had at least eighteen rope walks—industrial operations devoted to the manufacture of cordage. Three were government-sponsored and staffed by official commissioners authorized to purchase hemp from farmers with public money.

Their job was not easy. "I have had but little success in Purchasing hemp," wrote Alexander Sinclair from Staunton, Va., back to his boss at the Public Rope Walk at Warwick in 1779. "[T]he People are asking three hundred pounds [per] Ton delivered here for it, which is so far above the usual price."

During the American Revolution, Virginia had at least four hemp mills, which facilitated some of the hard work involved in processing. One was at the Williamsburg Manufactory, an operation charged with turning raw materials into finished textiles. In a July 1777 advertisement in *The Virginia Gazette*, the Williamsburg Manufactory advertised for sale at an upcoming auction "about four hundred Yards of Hempen Linen." The volume of that single transaction equivalent to the amount needed for approximately twenty tents for the army—suggests farmers were growing a large amount of hemp nearby. Long-distance transport of the unprocessed stalks, which were much heavier than the end product, did not make economic sense.

By the end of the American Revolution, Virginia produced five thousand tons of hemp annually—some twenty thousand acres worth—but when the gunshots abated, so too did the pressing need for this versatile crop. Demand that lingered was satisfied in greener pastures settlers discovered in Kentucky and Tennessee, and with foreign imports. Hemp flourished as a domestic cash crop through World War II and beyond, but the plant's utility was no match for advocates of temperance.

Throughout the twentieth century, individual states and the federal government criminalized cannabis. The harmful effects of the plant's ability to intoxicate were too great a threat, its useful products

notwithstanding. There were, after all, synthetic fibers capable of filling the role hemp once did.

In recent decades many Americans have been rethinking the nation's relationship to hemp. Though hemp's legacy in colonial America largely hides in the shadow of marijuana's prohibition, traces still exist at Colonial Williamsburg. Beside the Taliaferro-Cole Shop, where Colonial Williamsburg's weavers ply their trade, is a large, fluted stone. This is an old hemp mill stone, recovered by archaeologists from the banks of Queens Creek nearby, and it once turned at the Williamsburg Manufactory. To this tool millers hitched a draft animal that walked in endless circles, breaking hemp, liberating strong fibers that held together a new nation.



(Courtesy Colonial Williamsburg Foundation)

Hemp Tent

By Mark D. Hutter

Master of the Tailor Shop in Colonial Williamsburg

Tailors, sail-makers and upholsterers throughout the colonies took up needle and shears to sew tents for America's army. Of the untold thousands of tents produced during the Revolution, the only two known to survive are those of General Washington: his private sleeping and office marquee, and the larger dining and meeting marquee.

Their now fragile pieces are scattered between the collections of the Smithsonian Institution, the National Park Service at Yorktown and the Museum of the American Revolution in Philadelphia. Over the past several years, tailors of Colonial Williamsburg's Department of Historic Trades have worked with the staff of the Museum of the American Revolution to study and document the linen canvas roof and wall in their collection, once used as the Commander in Chief's field headquarters and now referred to, somewhat tongue-in-cheek, as the First Oval Office.

During the summer of 2013 the tailors and an assembled crew of tent-makers replicated Washington's office marquee, as other trades made the accompanying mahogany poles, iron fittings, oak tent pins and leather—all based on Washington's original. Washington endeared himself to his men by spending much of the war in the field and in his tent. "I will not soon quit a tent once I am in one," he once wrote.



Cannabis in eighteenth-century Augusta County? Absolutely!

By Nancy Sorrells

***Editor's Note:** While cannabis as a therapeutic medicine and a recreation drug often appears in the headlines in twenty-first century Virginia, this article by Nancy Sorrells, a reprint from a local newspaper, serves to remind readers as to the importance of the plant to the eighteenth-century Augusta County economy.*

When I recently read about the marijuana plants being secretly cultivated by trespassers at the Frontier Culture Museum, I couldn't help but smile a little bit at the historic irony. For you see, a place that interprets the Shenandoah Valley frontier might actually want to grow cannabis on its eighteenth-century farm if it could be done legally! That's what Augusta County farmers did in the 1760s and 1770s to the tune of big dollars.

Of course the cannabis plant that was grown on the frontier differed from those being illegally grown at the Frontier Culture Museum in the fact that it contained much lower percentages of tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) than those plants grown today as a recreational drug that people use to get high. In much the same way as there are different varieties of roses or corn, there are different varieties of cannabis. Most of the two thousand or so cannabis varieties contain less than .3 percent THC while those grown for recreational use have anywhere from two to twenty percent THC in the final product.

So, back to the cannabis plant grown in Augusta County known as hemp. This plant was grown for the fibers in its stalk which, when properly prepared, could be used to make rope or cloth, especially sailcloth on ships. In fact, the word canvas actually comes from the word cannabis. The cultivation of cannabis as a fiber plant is thousands and thousands of years old. In a time when a country with the biggest navy ruled the world, the cultivation of hemp was huge—being used as the fibrous caulk to seal spaces between boards for watertight ship building, as ropes for rigging, and as the sails themselves. Christopher Columbus's ships contained hemp.

Because of a combination of factors, Augusta County turned out to be a perfect place to cultivate hemp starting in the late 1750s. Before that time, the Valley had a mixed farming economy with wheat, rye, oats, and corn

being grown and cattle, hogs, and sheep being the main livestock. Unlike the rest of Virginia, tobacco was not grown in significant quantities. This was not because tobacco did not grow well here, because it did. It was more a matter of how to get the finished product to the seaboard markets.

So when the Virginia government started offering subsidies to help offset poor tobacco prices and encourage international trade, Augusta County farmers jumped at the opportunity to carve out a place for hemp production within their mixed farming routine. The Virginia legislature paid farmers four shillings per hundredweight of hemp harvested and added two more shillings for each hundredweight shipped to England. The incentive was tailor made for the Valley farmers who had come from the north of Ireland and knew fiber production. In Ireland, their main agricultural cash crop came from turning flax into linen. They knew how to grow and process flax and turn this fiber crop into a finished product. The process for turning hemp into a useful fiber was almost identical.

Hemp plants were pulled out by the roots in the fall and laid out in the fields to rot (called retting) after being repeatedly wet by the weather. The process, which took as long as three months, broke down the gums and hard outside layers of the plant stems to reveal the inner fibers. Once this was finished, the plants were broken on a wooden break. At this point the hemp was called gross hemp and was sometimes sold at this stage for someone else to process further into rope or cloth. However most Valley farmers took the processing at least one step further and scutched their hemp to remove all of the pieces of bark. The product was now called neat hemp. The final processing stage was called hackling, where the fibers were pulled through a series of metal spikes in order to straighten the long fibers and orient them all in the same direction. If you are interested in seeing this process in detail, the Frontier Culture Museum does process flax into linen.

Two sources of information help us understand the importance of hemp to the farming economy of Augusta County. First the court order books of the time record the men who turned in hemp to receive their government subsidy. These men were issued hemp certificates that could be used to pay taxes. A bundle of about one hundred certificates presented in lieu of cash for taxes still is preserved in the Augusta County courthouse.

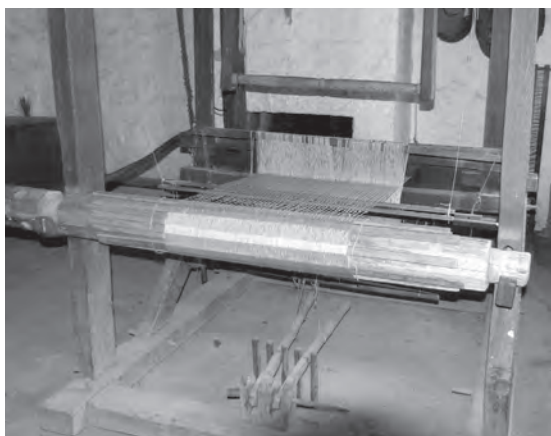
The first known response to the government-encouraged hemp cultivation by Augusta County farmers is in November of 1759 when James Craig received his bounty for 687 pounds of cleaned hemp. Two



A costumed interpreter from the Frontier Culture Museum demonstrates the steps in processing a fiber plant, in this case flax, although hemp would be exactly the same. At the top left, the interpreter is holding a bundle of dried and retted flax. Moving clockwise, the first step is to break the flax using a flax break that crushes the hard outer layer on the stalk. The next step is scutching, whereby a wooden paddle is used to further remove the outer layer. The remaining fibers are then hackled by pulling the long fibers through rows of spikes. This straightens and further cleans the fibers so that they are ready for spinning.



The fibers are then spun on a spinning wheel, left, and woven on a loom, below middle. The final product is a bolt of light brown cloth. The cloth can be whitened by bleaching should that be desired.



*Weighed for M^r Samuel Henderson one thousand
and sixty nine pounds of Hemp Winter Rotted
May 16th 1767*
Sam^l M^r Dowell

Augusta County hemp certificate issued to Samuel Henderson for 1,999 pounds of "winter rotted" hemp that he brought in to be weighed in November of 1767.

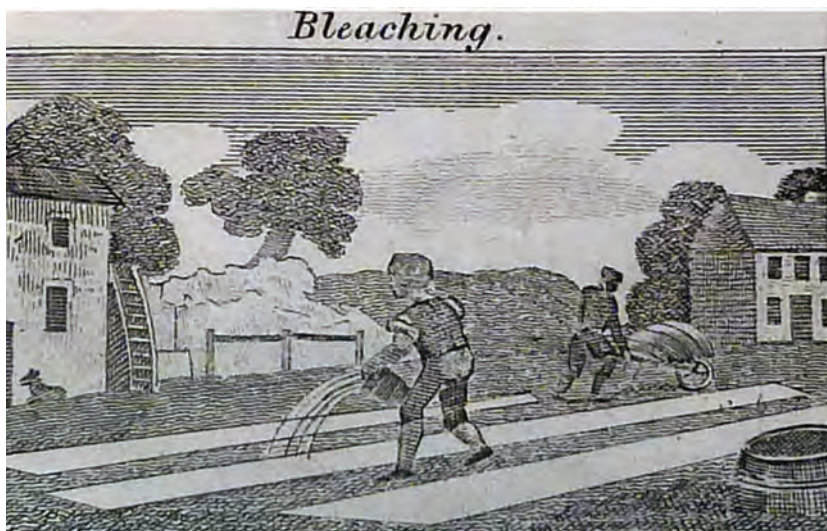
years later Thomas Lewis, the son of area founder John Lewis, turned in 3,393 pounds of "winter rotted, clean bright hemp" in February 1762.

Both Craig and Lewis received a tidy profit from their hemp venture. It took six tons of harvested hemp to produce a ton of marketable hemp. An acre yielded about five hundred pounds of hemp so Craig would have had about eight acres under cultivation and Lewis about forty acres. In 1760, neat hemp brought anywhere from twenty-five to twenty-six shillings per one hundred pounds. Add in the bounty of four shillings per hundred pounds and Craig made a profit of nine pounds and Lewis gained forty-five pounds. However, during this period the hemp had to be taken by wagon to Philadelphia, which would probably have reduced their profits by as much as ten percent according to some historians.

During the American Revolution the need for hemp skyrocketed and Augusta County farmers led the nation in production. The processed hemp was used for the American war effort where the demand for sailcloth, canvas, sacks, and rope was intense for both the army and the navy.

Again the government stepped in to subsidize production. I find it ironic in this day where the political rhetoric is so tinged with smaller government and privatization statements that the success of our very founding was based so heavily on government help. In the Valley, for instance, the main hindrance to increased hemp production had always been transportation costs. So, Virginia stepped in and subsidized those costs. Farmers had only to take their product to a local collection point and government officials took over from there with government hired wagons and drivers. In Staunton, the new Virginia government paid for the construction of a sail cloth factory so manufacture could take place where the product was grown.

The result was that Augusta County hemp production doubled during the American Revolution. Between 1776 and 1783, about 16,000 acres of hemp were cultivated in the Valley of Virginia with Augusta leading the way with 9,000 acres being grown. Botetourt was second and



An eighteenth-century bleaching green.

Frederick was third. In Augusta somewhere between 700 and 750 farmers, or one in ten, jumped on the bandwagon.

When the state more or less took over the hemp trade it forever altered Augusta County's trade patterns— orienting them more toward Richmond. Before the Revolution, most of Augusta's trade went to Philadelphia. So from 1776 onward, Augusta was oriented more east than north with its trade and communication patterns. During the Revolution, hemp and butter headed to Richmond in large quantities. The return load always contained salt, an essential item that is not found naturally in the Shenandoah Valley, and other commercial manufactured goods.

The rise of hemp production had one other lasting effect on Augusta County. Although the first settlement of Augusta County took place in the 1720s, it was not until the 1760s that large numbers of enslaved African-Americans appeared. There were some African-Americans before that but in low numbers and many were free. However, hemp cultivation and processing is very labor intensive and the need to control the work force drove the importation of large numbers of slaves. It was a trend that would not be reversed until the Civil War at which time one person in five in Augusta County was an enslaved American.

After the American Revolution, the government subsidies for hemp ended, as did the urgency for military supplies. Augusta County farmers continued their mixed farming activities just as they had through the hemp boom, but found it more profitable to increase their grain production,

especially wheat and corn. Soon hemp was just a memory as milling and distilling began to dominate the county's agricultural scene.

If you would like to learn more about Augusta's hemp days, I would recommend two places to start. The *Augusta Historical Bulletin*, in the fall of 1972, contains an article about the county's hemp certificates. Check it out to see if your ancestor was one of the one hundred or so folks known to have paid their county taxes with hemp tickets. If you are interested in what agriculture and the economy was like in the Shenandoah Valley in the 1700s, I would highly recommend one of my favorite books, *Commercialism and Frontier: Perspectives on the Early Shenandoah Valley* by Robert Mitchell. This is long out of print but you can get it through your local public library. It is not light reading but it is absolutely eye opening and will blow any preconceptions about an isolated frontier out of the water.



Hemp played an important role in transportation. Hempen cloth was used to make the cover and rope was used to lash the cover down on this eighteenth-century Virginia freight wagon. (Wagon on display in the "Bound Away: Virginia and the Westward Movement" at the Virginia Museum of History & Culture.)

Returning home: President Wilson's triumphant visit to Staunton in 1912

By Alex Pinelli

Editor's Note: *The purpose of this work is to give a detailed account of Woodrow Wilson's visit to Staunton in 1912. The trip was a birthday celebration for Wilson who was turning fifty-six on December 28, but was also a chance to revel in his recent election to the U.S. Presidency. The account given focuses largely on events surrounding his stay in the city of his birth. However, it also gives insights into the city of Staunton and how the city prepared and managed during this massive undertaking. It was a sentimental trip for Wilson that neither he nor the city of Staunton would soon forget.*

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In December 1912 President-elect Thomas Woodrow Wilson celebrated his fifty-sixth birthday in the town where he was born: Staunton, Virginia. Staunton is in the mountainous Shenandoah Valley region of north-central Virginia. It was predominantly settled and populated by Scotch-Irish and Germans from the late eighteenth century throughout the early twentieth century.¹ Before becoming the birthplace of a future President of the United States, it was primarily known as a transportation hub as well as a supply depot during the Civil War.²

Woodrow Wilson's father, Joseph Ruggles Wilson, is the reason the future president was born in Staunton. In 1854, two years before he was born, his father received an invitation to become the minister of the Presbyterian Church in Staunton (now known as First Presbyterian Church).³ The family

lived in Staunton and occupied the Manse (a house for a Presbyterian minister and his family) for just over a year. They ended up leaving Virginia all together when Joseph was offered the opportunity to preside over a larger congregation in Augusta, Georgia.⁴ The Manse where Wilson was born, and the surrounding buildings have become home to the Presidential Library and Museum of Woodrow Wilson, the largest repository of Woodrow Wilson material and collections in the world. His birthday trip remains one of the few trips he took to the city as an adult and holds significance to Staunton, Augusta County, Virginian, and presidential history.

Despite the importance of the occasion to the city, there is no full historiography of Wilson's birthday trip to Staunton. There are a few biographical and miscellaneous texts that broach the subject. Indeed, early biographical works from Ray Standard Baker, Arthur S. Link, and Wilson's own daughter Eleanor recollect in varying detail his trip to the city.⁵ More recently, John Milton Cooper Jr.'s Pulitzer Prize winning book, *Woodrow Wilson*, opens with a story from Wilson's birthday trip to Staunton.⁶ Along with these lengthy books there are also online works dedicated solely to the trip. The Woodrow Wilson Library sometimes publishes writings on its website where interns have created two blogs focusing on varying aspects of the trip, and a more lengthy one published by the Massanutten Regional Library, but none of previously mentioned books or blogs give an assiduous account of his trip from start to finish.⁷ This paper will attempt to remedy this and give a detailed and chronological overview of Wilson's trip to Staunton based largely on contemporary newspapers, letters, photographs, and a number of collections from the Woodrow Wilson Library.

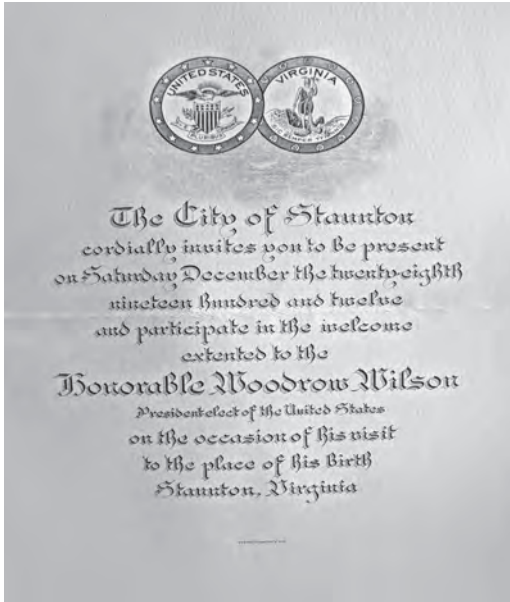
Two days after the contentious election of 1912, representatives from the nation's first "Wilson for President" club in Staunton arrived in Princeton, New Jersey. Their objective was to invite the future President to come and celebrate his victory in his birthplace.⁸ According to Reverend Dr. Abel McIver Fraser, the occupant of the Manse and minister at First Presbyterian at the time of the election, Wilson "accepted [the invitation] at once," and it was Wilson himself who selected his birthday, Saturday December, 28, as the day he would like to visit.⁹ Staunton was not the only town vying for a chance to host the President-elect. *The Times Dispatch*, a newspaper out of Richmond, reported that between the time of his election and his trip to Staunton, Wilson had turned down invitations from "hundreds of other places," including the Virginia capital of Richmond.¹⁰

A little over a week after informally accepting the invitation to come, the President-elect took a month-long vacation trip to Bermuda. He and

his family left on November 16 and returned on December 16, eleven days before his trip to Staunton.¹¹ While in Bermuda he was able to review the manuscript of *The New Freedom* (a number of selected speeches from his campaign).¹² It is evident that some of the themes from *The New Freedom* permeated the speech he gave at Mary Baldwin Seminary during his visit to his birthplace just days later. Also, while in Bermuda on December 6, Wilson wrote a letter to the Mayor of Staunton, Martin Hampton Wayt, officially confirming his trip and wrote of his “delightful anticipation” of visiting his birthplace.¹³ From the time Mayor Wayt received the letter preparations were underway in Staunton.

There was much to be done to the town including decorating, cleaning, making housing arrangements, planning meals and procuring entertainment. To achieve this, Staunton created a number of committees to prepare. There was a Music, Invitation, Press, Military and Parade, Transportation, Central, Finance and Contribution, and Decoration Committee.¹⁴ Arrangements were handled well by the committee members and their respective chairs. Overall, it seemed to be an orderly but arduous affair for all those involved. One of the first things to do was to plan out exactly what was going to unfold when Mr. and Mrs. Wilson arrived on the 27th of December. A group of men on the Central Committee put together a “homecoming program.” This program explained what would happen from the moment Wilson stepped off the train until the festivities officially came to a close at 4 p.m. on the December 28. According to the program there was to be a “torchlight procession” when the President-elect arrived that would march from the railroad station, turn onto the central road in town, Beverley Street, and then parade a few blocks until they reached Coalter Street where the Manse was located. This was to be followed by a public speaking display from prominent individuals and performances by local bands at the Virginia Hotel. Wilson’s birthday would start with a reception at the Manse for “[o]fficial guests” to come pay their respects to Wilson. There would then be a parade at noon, and a speech given by Wilson at Mary Baldwin Seminary at 2:30. A reception would follow the speech at 3:00 and the day would officially end with another reception for Mrs. Wilson and the Governor of Virginia’s wife, Mrs. Mann at Stuart Hall (The Virginia Female Institute).¹⁵

The residents of Staunton spent thousands of dollars on decorating, making the town a sea of festive décor. There were over two hundred sixteen-foot white venetian columns erected with large electric globes atop that stretched from the Manse on Coalter to in front of the Trinity Episcopal Church. Evergreen garlands, wrapped around each column, gave the city a



The official invitation issued by the City of Staunton. (ACHS)

post-Christmas charm.¹⁶ Patriotic flags, ribbon, and bunting hung from public buildings as well as private businesses and homes. The most adorned area in town was Beverley Street. This was the main route used to take Wilson to the Manse on the night he arrived as well as the location for Wilson's viewing station during the planned parade. One of the more unusual decorations was a large three-foot high "Democratic roster" [sic] sent from Pennsylvania, that was placed atop a large arch at the C&O train station where Wilson's train arrived.¹⁷

The viewing station was built in front of Stonewall Jackson School facing Trinity Episcopal Church. It was originally designed to be enclosed in glass and heated to prevent Wilson from catching a cold, but the weather of the day made this unnecessary.¹⁸ Due to the expectations of such a large influx of people—the anticipated crowd was 30,000—Staunton had requested over five hundred military cots and blankets and rations for 15,000 people from the government.¹⁹ These were placed in schools, store-rooms, armories, and "every other space available."²⁰ In a town of roughly 12,000, it was reported that nearly all the residents were throwing their doors open to anyone who needed a place stay.²¹ *The Alexandria Gazette* stated that preparations for the festivities took "nearly two weeks," but by the day of the President-elect's arrival the streets had been "flushed...scrubbed, and swept," ready for the birthday celebration to begin.²²

Cleaning the streets, making and hanging decorations, and guest arrangements were not the only preparations needed. The Manse was



The city streets were decorated for the celebration of President Wilson's homecoming. At the top is Augusta Street, while the middle photograph is Beverley Street during the day. The bottom image is Beverley Street at night. The top and bottom images are courtesy of the Woodrow Wilson Presidential Library, Staunton, Va., while the middle image is from the ACHS archives.



made ready and adorned with cut flowers and potted plants given freely by the town florist.²³ Invitations were made and sent out to the residents of Staunton inviting them to join in welcoming Wilson back to his birthplace.²⁴ There was even an “old-time Virginia dinner” planned, with “Virginia ham of the Smithfield variety, coffee, corn pone, sweet potatoes, turkey...served ‘old planation’ style.”²⁵ However, this dinner was canceled and in lieu of it a French themed dinner was served the night of his birthday.

Another important preparation was security. Besides the secret service detail Wilson traveled with, the Chief of Police in Washington, D.C. Major Sylvester, along with twenty officers were made available for the trip to Staunton to protect the president-elect “against possible assault.”²⁶ As the event neared, the arrangements were coming together splendidly.

Then, on the December 23, Wilson developed a cold, and by Christmas it had turned into a fever of 101°F.²⁷ On the morning of December 27 Doctor James Carnochan advised Wilson to stay in bed and continue his bed rest but at Wilson’s insistence and against his better judgment Carnochan declared that Wilson was “about himself again” and able to make the journey.²⁸ Mr. and Mrs. Wilson left a rainy Trenton, New Jersey at 10:30 on the morning of the December 27. They arrived at Princeton Junction at 10:48 where they boarded a faster train and National Chairman William McCombs along with a number of other political allies, friends, and congressman joined them.²⁹ When they left Princeton there were around twenty-five passengers on board. By the time they reached Staunton, the train had over one hundred persons aboard.³⁰

The rest of the ride down was a celebration in itself. Bonfires were lit, fireworks prepared, and Wilson had originally planned to speak at a few stops along the way. However, due to his doctor’s recommendation against any “unnecessary exposure” he did not make any speeches.³¹ Regardless, the trip ended up being quite the festive occasion. Around noon the train passed through Philadelphia followed by Wilson’s first stop at the capital since winning the election.³² While in Washington, D.C., he switched from the Pennsylvania tracks to the quicker Chesapeake and Ohio (C&O) railway and had a short discussion with William Eustis from the inaugural committee about how he would like to enjoy a simple inauguration this upcoming year, because in his opinion, they had been “overdone in the past.”³³

Once the train crossed the state line into Virginia, the birthday party seemed to have really begun. There were over one thousand enthusiastic Virginians awaiting Wilson’s arrival in Alexandria at 3:30 p.m. With the bonfire canceled due to high winds, as Wilson’s train came into sight, the

was in Charlottesville. There was a large electric sign which read, "Welcome Wilson" and red torches were lit as the train entered the station at 7 p.m. A Richmond paper reported that it was the "largest crowd that ever gathered at the Main Street station."³⁹ Two additional train cars were added for prominent Virginian politicians and businessmen from across the state. Again, Wilson was urged to speak to the mass of people but again did not. He did, however, manage to shake hands "with a few hundred" people before the train left for its final destination.

They arrived in Staunton at 8:25 forty-five minutes behind schedule.⁴⁰ At the Staunton depot, there was a large arch with the words "Welcome Home" illuminated in electric lights along with Mayor Wayt there to greet the guest of honor.⁴¹ The police unit sent from Washington along with the Virginia militia were undertaking crowd control duties. The Staunton Infantry Battalion, part of the Virginia National Guard, was there with batons raised to form a type of channel for the President-elect and guests to use as a walkway.⁴² Mayor Wayt boarded the train to greet his visitors and then he, along with the Wilsons, disembarked and made their way into a closed automobile.⁴³ As the car left, preceded by four troops of cavalry from Fort Myers and dozens of police, the brass band present struck up the tune "Dixie" to let everyone know the President-elect had indeed arrived.⁴⁴

One account noted that the arrival was "over before most people knew it had begun." It seems that Wilson's recovery from his recent illness was a major reason for not having more of a formal greeting at the station. However, the celebration was not dampened. The band continued to play and the planned torchlight procession, rather than leading Wilson to the Manse, followed him up Beverley Street with a crowd of over "5,000 participants [who] wore masks and fantastic costumes."⁴⁵ A number of the more prominent politicians and individuals were shuttled to their respective hosts' homes, while still others, including Governor William Hodges Mann, made their way to the Virginia Hotel to entertain crowds with the public speaking exhibition that had been in the official program.⁴⁶

As the Wilsons' arrived at the Manse around 9 p.m. they were greeted at the gate by First Presbyterian's minister and the occupant of the manse Dr. Fraser who recalled those events in short letter.⁴⁷

We will never forget the emotions of that Friday evening as we waited for the party to come to the Manse from the train... The house was spic and span, every spot had had its last touch, fires were glowing in every grate, the halls and porches and every room were brilliant with electric light... Presently there came a

sound of rapidly coming lines of U.S. Cavalry on either side of the street, the rush of the crowd of inevitable small boys, followed by the bustle of photographers fixing for flash light pictures, then the band, then the automobile stopped at the gate. The party was introduced to the mistress of the Manse, the mayor retired and we took our guests within and had them all to ourselves."⁴⁸

The band mentioned above was the Stonewall Brigade Band that had played "Home Sweet Home" and "Dixie" as Wilson had arrived.⁴⁹ At one point as Wilson stood on the portico with Dr. Fraser he supposedly yelled to those who gathered around the Manse, "It's fine to be back again."⁵⁰ Then, as he readied himself to head inside, he told the crowd as to let them know the night was over, "[n]ow all hands may go home and go to bed."⁵¹

Several papers reported that Wilson slept in the same room he was born in, mainly due to the fact that this was the original plan. A week before leaving Wilson told reports, "I am going to sleep in the same bed I was born in."⁵² This then became a common error that was repeated in nearly all the papers as well the historiography, even some of the most well-known and recent scholarly works reported that he slept in the bed that he was born in although it was actually supposed to be only the same room, not the same bed.⁵³ However, even that did not happen because Wilson and his wife Ellen were concerned about the large gathering of people outside the Manse, and the possibility of people trying to look through the first floor window and into the room where



Street decorations for Wilson's visit. Courtesy of the Woodrow Wilson Presidential Library, Staunton, Va.

he was born, they decided they would sleep more soundly on the second floor in the study.⁵⁴

On the morning of his fifty-sixth birthday, the Wilsons woke up to a full-plated breakfast prepared by Mrs. Fraser that included oranges, oatmeal, boiled chicken, orange marmalade, beaten biscuits, waffles, and coffee.⁵⁵ There was a singular report from the *Staunton Daily Leader* that all the meals eaten at the Manse were eaten with a fork and knife originally owned by James Madison. They were supposedly given to Madison by Alexander Hamilton and the niece of President of Madison; a Miss Chapman, made the request the President-elect use these utensils during his stay.⁵⁶ After breakfast, the Wilsons and Frasers prepared for the planned 10 a.m. reception at the Manse. This was a formal affair with only “county and city officials, committeemen, [and] prominent visitors” allowed to enter.⁵⁷ Chairman of the Central Committee, S.D. Timberlake Jr., introduced those being admitted along with the various committee members who would have had small colored ribbons to indicate which committee they served on. The line of visitors was steady “for nearly an hour,” and stretched outside and around the street.⁵⁸

During the morning reception Charles Catlett, a member of the original “Wilson for President” club in Staunton, as well as a committee member, presented Wilson with two “miniature portraits on ivory medallions” of his



Street decorations for Wilson's visit. Courtesy of the Woodrow Wilson Presidential Library, Staunton, Va.

father and mother. This was a gift on behalf of the entire city of Staunton and was a present that Wilson said he greatly appreciated. It was created by the niece of Confederate General J.E.B Stuart, Miss Ellen Douglas, "a well-known painter...[and] art teacher at Stuart Hall."⁵⁹ It was also during this timeframe, sometime before the parade, that Mrs. Wilson slipped out to take an automobile ride around Staunton with the Fraser women and that Dr. Fraser supposedly took Wilson to a sanitorium to visit a Mrs. Kayser. She was thought to have cared for Wilson when he was baby and believed to be a close friend of the Wilson family. Two other nurses, Mrs. P.L. Hoover and Miss Amanda Felts, who were said to have held Tommy as a baby were invited to stop by the Manse later that day.⁶⁰

It most likely would have also been during this time frame that another popular story in the historiography could have happened. There is some doubt about its veracity and no record has ever been found that would help identify the person involved. The story appeared in Eleanor Wilson's book *The Woodrow Wilsons* and was then retold in Arthur Link's *Wilson*, along with Cooper's more recent *Woodrow Wilson*.⁶¹ The story goes as follows: Wilson apparently "slipped off" to visit an old and deaf "aunt Janie" who was supposed to be still living in the area. She was forced to use a long black ear-trumpeter to hear. So when she saw Wilson, she asked him, "Well Tommy what are you doing now?" to which Wilson replied, "I've been elected President Aunt Janie." She retorted with a "what...well, well...president of what?" Then Wilson supposedly grabbed the trumpeter with both fists and yelled back enthusiastically, "President of the United States." The old woman just "smiled skeptically and dismissed him."⁶² While a humorous and heartwarming story, there is little actual proof as to its veracity.

The next item on the day's agenda was the review of parade scheduled for noon.⁶³ It was planned to go through the "principle streets" of town, out Main Street and then turn to go toward Mary Baldwin Seminary.⁶⁴ As stated earlier, the Wilsons along with Governor Mann would be viewing the parade from a stand erected on Beverley Street, just a few short blocks away from the Manse.⁶⁵ Staunton and Beverley Street, in particular, were accustomed to parades, festivals, and street fairs. From the late nineteenth-century into the twentieth century, the streets had welcomed many spectacular exhibitions and circuses but none so memorable as Wilson's birthday celebration.⁶⁶ Wilson was taken to the parade in a carriage with Governor Mann and two Secret Service men. A motorcade of five vehicles followed with city, county, and state officials along with other renowned members of the political and business elite. The last car carried Mrs. Wilson, Mrs. Mann, and Dr. Fraser.



(left) Wilson with Virginia Governor William H. Mann in the reviewing stand during the city parade (middle). The bottom photo shows the crowd at Mary Baldwin as Wilson arrived. Courtesy of the Woodrow Wilson Presidential Library, Staunton, Va.



The trip to the viewing station marked the actual start of parade when Wilson and his caravan made their way past throngs of onlookers.⁶⁷

They arrived at the reviewing stand about 12:30.⁶⁸ It was decorated with bunting and had canvas on the top and both side to protect the viewers from the elements if necessary.⁶⁹ There was a large white arch towering behind the entire party giving the whole viewing stand a more formal appeal.⁷⁰ Before the parade began to march past the viewing station, a number of residents were eager to try and shake hands with the President-elect. A few papers retold a conversation between Wilson and an "old letter carrier" who informed Wilson that he had heard his father preach years back. Wilson asked if it did him any good, and the jaunty response that invoked some laughter was, "No, I'm a Methodist."⁷¹

There are contradictory reports of the exact order of the parade and thus far, an exhaustive list of all who were involved has been elusive. However, what can be stated with certainty is that after Wilson and his party took their seats the Stonewall Brigade Band was one of the first groups to march past them in the reviewing stand. Following them the order gets murky but: the 15th Calvary unit, a Field Artillery unit with horse drawn cannons, three hundred and fifty Virginia Military Institute Cadets who "stole the show," the Staunton Boy Scouts, marshals on horseback, Wilson Clubs from around the state, several companies of Virginia militia men from Lynchburg, Danville, Harrisonburg, Culpeper, Charlottesville, and Staunton and a number of other bands all made their way past the future president.⁷² There was also a large banner the read, "Staunton, Va., Woodrow Wilson's birthplace," which received a place honor in the parade. Bringing up the rear was "Billy Kyle," a horse who marched in the last Democratic President's parade back in 1892 for Grover Cleveland.⁷³ The march past the viewing stand is thought to have lasted fifteen minutes, with about five minutes of handshakes afterward.⁷⁴

The newspapers reported that first in line to shake Wilson's hand was a former slave of Wilson's parents who had "totted" him around when Wilson a baby.⁷⁵ Since then, he had become a Union soldier before making his way as a successful hardware and furniture store owner in Staunton. The accounts of the verbal transaction between the two seems unlikely and possibly fabricated. Frank Ware was twelve when Wilson was just a baby, so the chance of Ware asking, "My, my Marster[sic] Tommie[sic] is this really you?" seems farfetched, but it can be stated as fact that Frank T. Ware was indeed there to greet Wilson.⁷⁶ After the parade it was time for Wilson to head back to the Manse for lunch where he had his choice of clear soup, creamed potatoes, asparagus tips, and chicken salad with tea.⁷⁷

After lunch it was time to take the truly short trip, practically next door, to Mary Baldwin Seminary. Wilson rode in a horse drawn carriage and arrived around 3 p.m.⁷⁸ There was an enormous crowd waiting his first official remarks of the trip.⁷⁹ Dr. Fraser had the task of introducing Wilson, and he spoke of the nervous excitement in the city after the nomination process in Baltimore when people “gathered around the house in which he was born, filled with wild, undefined hope.” He went on to describe the joyous rapture of the entire town after the general election. The remarks only lasted ten minutes but were salutary to the highest degree.⁸⁰

Wilson’s speech at Mary Baldwin has been succinctly summarized in the past by R.S. Baker who correctly noted the main themes of “new ideals, and new duties of the nation.”⁸¹ It lasted roughly thirty-five minutes and some of the ideas from his campaign and *The New Freedom* were intermingled throughout.⁸² But, before Wilson looked into the future he discussed his past and his “associations with Staunton.” He described them as “boyish” and of “a trivial character” especially in respect with the task that lay before him. With one foot in the past and the other in the future he hoped to finally end the sectionalism that had “divided the great sections of this country” and saw himself as “instrument in drawing together...all men” regardless of region.

However, the all-encompassing theme of the entire speech could be summed up by the word “service”. This word, or a derivation of it came up twenty-two times in the speech. He would come back to this idea of service throughout the address. Wilson saw the United States as entering a “new age” where the “rank and file of men” should be “served” by the institutions of government. He was not only speaking of America but more broadly about “mankind” and “humanity.” These broad and sweeping ideas very much reflected Wilson’s worldview. He tended to see the world and policy ideas in terms of “moral worth.”⁸³ He spoke on the need for reform in the business community. There was a need for there to be a “heart in government” he stated, where “the men who serve will be the men who profit.” He knew these ideas required some difficult changes for those in power and mentioned that in office he would have to “put on his war paint” and let those who oppose his idealism that the dollar could not come at the cost of the man. Those in the business community, Wilson claimed, needed to be aware that a “quid pro quo” was needed to make money. He was not, and this he makes clear in this speech and *The New Freedom*, speaking of the everyday businessman or as Wilson might say, a man on the make. His focus was on a major political theme of the age, which was monopolization



*President Woodrow Wilson giving his speech at Mary Baldwin.
Courtesy of the Woodrow Wilson Presidential Library, Staunton, Va.*

of industry. He noted that a man is indeed entitled the money he makes out of ingenuity, but "is not entitled to anything when he creates...a sort of air-tight isolation which makes is impossible for anybody else to suggest anything in that field."⁸⁴ Overall, the speech was viewed in a positive light.

After his address had ended Wilson retreated into Mary Baldwin and attended a small reception inside.⁸⁵ As he went inside, Mrs. Wilson had an engagement of her own to attend. The Daughters of American Revolution and the United Daughters of the Confederacy held a gala in her honor at the all-girls school Stuart Hall, previously known as the Virginia Female Institute.⁸⁶ It was decorated with potted plants, roses, and was described as great success. The United States Cavalary Band played in the auditorium

for the enjoyment of all the guests.⁸⁷ Happening concurrently with both of the Wilson receptions were events happening in Staunton to entertain the thousands of visitors who had sojourned to the city. While the Cavalry Band was playing at Stuart Hall the rest of the unit under the direction of Major Woods of the First Squadron, Fifteenth Regiment put on a “series of military maneuvers” for onlookers at 4 p.m. in a subsection of western Staunton called Plunkettsville. Throughout the whole town there was music being played by a variety of musical groups from the area including the Virginia Military Institute, Basic, Stonewall, Dayton, and Roman bands.⁸⁸

The dual receptions marked the end of the official program planned by the Central Committee.⁸⁹ Yet, this did not mark the end of the celebration. When Wilson returned to the Manse he had a delectable southern-style dinner prepared for him by Mrs. Fraser that included soup, turkey, ham, rice, peas on toast, spinach, tomatoes on lettuce, corn pone, ice cream, coffee, lady Baltimore cake, and marshmallow fudge.⁹⁰ This however, would be only one of two large meals he would be having that day. Two prominent Staunton businessmen L.G. Strauss and Julius L. Witz have been credited with staging the banquet that evening at Staunton Military Academy (SMA).⁹¹ It was held inside the newly built SMA mess hall, which was a “huge room” that had cast iron columns.⁹² There are conflicting reports on the exact time the event began, but it seems to have fallen sometime between 8 and 9 p.m.⁹³ One reporter categorized the banquet as “easily the feature of Wilson’s entire stay...”.⁹⁴

There were over 350 attendees, many of whom were Virginians present at the Democratic Nominating Convention in Baltimore.⁹⁵ The hall was elegantly decorated with long rectangular tables, white table cloths, and was ostensibly a white-glove affair that featured an assorted array of French cuisine catered by Chas Rauscher featuring but not limited to Terrapin a la Baltimore, Saddle of Southdown Mutton Soubise, and Aspic of Foie Gras Strasbourgese.⁹⁶ There were a number of toasts and responses planned for the evening, which included toasts to the President, Staunton, Virginia, Democrat Party, with responses given by Mayor Wayt, Speaker of the Virginia House of Delegates Richard E. Byrd, Governor Mann, William McCombs, a congressman, general, and of course the President-elect.⁹⁷ Sometime during the banquet, quite likely as he was being introduced by the toastmaster, a birthday cake with fifty-six candles was brought out while a band performed, “Auld Lang Syne.”⁹⁸

The second speech Wilson gave that day had a different tone than the one given at Mary Baldwin Seminary. Historian John Cooper called both

speeches “rambling” and while that might not have been entirely true of his earlier speech, the description is rather apt for the one at the military academy. Wilson touched on several topics and told stories filled with analogies, that in themselves, were not bad, but there did not seem to be any unifying theme. He spoke on the values of neighbors and the principles we develop from them, peace as a weapon, the need for morality in individuals, and touched on his hope to lead the Philippines to self-rule.⁹⁹ He appeared to be speaking off the cuff, for which there is evidence in a letter he wrote to an old college friend Heath Dabney a little over week after his trip. In that letter, he noted how certain parts of his speech were made up “on the spur of the moment.”¹⁰⁰ This is most likely the reason for his most recounted comments from the evening, when he called out the Virginia delegation and one congressman individually for not supporting him during the nominating process in July.¹⁰¹

During the Democratic convention in July, Congressman Henry Delaware Flood of the 10th District of Virginia was a dedicated delegate for House Majority Leader Oscar Underwood. When Senator Martin who was originally an Underwood man, proposed the Virginia delegation vote as a block for Wilson, after dozens of ballots with no clear winner, Underwood was one of the few votes to vote against the idea but lost.¹⁰² This led to Wilson’s nomination on the forty-sixth ballot. Nevertheless, it was apparent Wilson was still holding grudge against many of the men, including Flood, in the audience that night. Towards the end of his speech he mentioned how, “a certain gentleman...[who] is present tonight” told him that he was “afraid” of him because Wilson might have a “screw loose.” He continued, “Virginia herself...showed no great enthusiasm for my nomination,” and spoke on how after the nomination “it became worth their while really to find out what I actually say.”¹⁰³ When reflecting on his speech he noted to his friend Dabney how his friends would need to get used his “way of always having a dart for somebody” even if he tries to do it in a “good natured way.”¹⁰⁴

When Flood stood up to speak in response to the toast to the United States, he gave a slight rebuke, and stated how Wilson had not “done the Virginia delegation justice.” If Wilson would have been there in Baltimore, Flood went on, he would have no reason to complain of the “lack of enthusiasm.” Flood then extolled Wilson for a short while before making the entire crowd stand to their feet with the prediction that Wilson would be in office for two full terms. His address was reported as having “no animosity” toward Wilson, and as actually having one of the, if not the, largest applause line of the night.¹⁰⁵ The end of the banquet marked the end of Woodrow Wilson’s fifty-sixth birthday celebration in Staunton. The next day however,

"thousands of people lined the streets and bands played" as Wilson left for Princeton on the Chesapeake and Ohio train, number four. Because he left a little after eleven, some reported that even the churches were deserted to watch him leave.¹⁰⁶

By all accounts, the celebration was a gigantic success. Wilson's trip totaled five to six thousand columns of news, fifteen hundred feet of moving picture film from five different motion picture representatives and hundreds of pictures taken by a crew of about fifteen men.¹⁰⁷ Estimates of attendance ranged anywhere from twenty to twenty-five thousand persons and was described in the press as "the greatest celebration ever held on Southern soil."¹⁰⁸ Other papers did not go that far but acknowledged a job well done. Well-traveled newspaper men stated that "they had never seen a city handle a big proposition any better that it compares favorably even...[with] big cities."¹⁰⁹ *The Times Dispatch* in Richmond wrote, "There was not a hitch. Nobody blundered," in the planning and rolling out the festivities.¹¹⁰ Wilson's told Mayor Wayt, "the visit here has done my health good. I am sure it had done my heart good." Wilson also wrote the mayor a letter after returning to New Jersey in which he stated how he "enjoyed [the trip] more than I can say" and it was "an ideal experience."¹¹¹ Indeed, for all the murkiness surrounding his banquet remarks and the rare emergence of politics, Wilson's trip to Staunton remained highly personal. The intimate nature of the visit, hospitality of the town, amiability of the people, and organization of the planning created a wonderful experience for not only Wilson but the city of Staunton and the state of Virginia.

Endnotes

¹Sergei, Troubetzkoy, *Staunton* (Charleston, S.C.: Arcadia Publishing, 2004), 7.

²"History." Staunton.Va., Government, About Us. <https://www.ci.staunton.va.us/government/history> (Accessed June 21, 2020).

³John Milton Cooper Jr. *Woodrow Wilson: A Biography* (New York: Random House, 2009), 14.

⁴"Proud Virginian", WoodrowWilson.org. Woodrow Wilson Library and Museum. <https://www.woodrowwilson.org/proud-virginian> (Accessed June 21, 2020).

⁵Ray Stannard Baker, *Woodrow Wilson: Life and Letters Vol 3*. (Garden City, N.Y., Doubleday, Page & co., 1927), 428-431; Eleanor Wilson McAdoo and Margaret Gaffey. *The Woodrow Wilsons* (New York: MacMillan, 1937), 195. Arthur S. Link, *Wilson: The New Freedom* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1956), 24-26.

⁶Cooper, *Woodrow Wilson*, 13.

⁷"Proud Virginian", WoodrowWilson.org; Hayley Moore, "Staunton's Son Comes Home", Woodrow Wilson Presidential Library Blog, June 3, 2016. <https://wwplblog.wordpress.com/2016/06/03/stauntons-son-comes-home/> (Accessed June 21, 2020); Hayley Moore, "Happy Birthday, Mr. President", Woodrow Wilson Presidential Library Blog, June 24, 2016. <https://wwplblog.wordpress.com/2016/06/24/happy-birthday-mr-president/> (Accessed June 21, 2020). "Woodrow Wilson's Birthday Celebration-Staunton Honors a Distinguished Son," Mrlib.org, Massanutten Regional Library, December 14, 2012. <https://mrlib.org/woodrow-wilsons-birthday-celebration-staunton-honors-a-distinguished-son/> (Accessed June 21, 2020).

⁸"Proud Virginian," WoodrowWilson.org.

⁹"Address of Welcoming, Wilson Responding," *Staunton Daily Leader*, Vol. 18, No. 12, Dec 29th, (Staunton, Va.). in *Woodrow Wilson Papers: Series 7: Speeches, Writings, and Academic Material, -1923; Subseries A: Speeches, 1882 to 1923; 1912, Sept. 27-1916, Oct. 28. 1912*. Manuscript/Mixed Material. <https://www.loc.gov/item/mss4602900766/>. (Accessed June 21, 2020).

¹⁰"State Prouder Than Ever of Illustrious Son," *The Times Dispatch*, Vol. 18, Number 21, (Richmond, Va.), 29 Dec. 1912. *Chronicle America: Historic American Newspapers*, Library of Congress. <<https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn85038615/1912-12-29/ed-1/seq-1/>> (Accessed June 26, 2020).; This is more than likely a bit of an embellishment.

¹¹Baker, *Woodrow Wilson*, 415, 423.

¹²*Ibid.*, 421.

¹³Woodrow Wilson, 1856-1924, "Woodrow Wilson to Martin H. Wayt," 1912 December 6, WWP22703, Woodrow Wilson Presidential Library Manuscript Collection, *Woodrow Wilson Presidential Library & Museum, Staunton, Virginia*.

¹⁴"Celebration Woodrow Wilson Home Coming December 1912," Scrapbook Collection 22, Box 1, Folder 3. Woodrow Wilson Presidential Library Photo Collection. *Woodrow Wilson Presidential Library & Museum, Staunton, Virginia*. This list may not be exhaustive. The Committee Logbook in the Scrapbook Collection needs closer examination.

¹⁵Staunton, Virginia. "Woodrow Wilson's Staunton, Virginia, Homecoming: Program," 1912 December 27, WWP22706, Woodrow Wilson Presidential Library Manuscript Collection. *Woodrow Wilson Presidential Library & Museum, Staunton, Virginia*. Mrs. Mann was the wife of Virginia Governor William Hodges Mann (1910-1914), who was the last Confederate soldier to hold the office of Governor of Virginia.

¹⁶"Miscellaneous Memorabilia," Box 1, Folder 4, MS480, Woodrow Wilson Presidential Library Manuscript Collection. *Woodrow Wilson Presidential Library & Museum, Staunton, Virginia*.

¹⁷"Bonfires Along Route," *Alexandria Gazette*, Volume 118, Number 571, 19 Dec. 1912. *Virginia Chronicle*. Library of Virginia. <https://viriniachronicle.com/?a=d&d=AG19121219&e=191-en-20-41--txt-txIN-Staunton+Woodrow+Wilson+1912> (Accessed June 26, 2020).; "Staunton is Ready," *Alexandria Gazette*. Volume 118, Number 577, 27 Dec. 1912. *Virginia Chronicle*. Library of Virginia. <https://viriniachronicle.com/?a=d&d=AG19121227.1.3&srpos=4&e=27-12-1912-29-12-1912--en-20-1--txt-txIN+Staunton+Woodrow+Wilson> (Accessed June 26, 2020).; "Beverly Street Decorated for Wilson's Visit" 1912 December 28, PC000116, Woodrow Wilson Presidential Library Postcard Collection. *Woodrow Wilson Presidential Library & Museum, Staunton, Virginia*.; "Decorations for Wilson's Visit," 1912 December 28, PC000108, Woodrow Wilson Presidential Library Postcard Collection. *Woodrow Wilson Presidential Library & Museum, Staunton, Virginia*.

¹⁸Troubetzkoy, *Staunton*, 96.; "To Heat Reviewing Stand," *The Evening News*. Vol. 26, Number 152. (Roanoke, Va.), 28 Dec. 1912. *Virginia Chronicle*. Library of Virginia. <https://viriniachronicle.com/?a=d&d=TVN19121227.1.3&e=191-en-20-181--txt-txIN-Staunton+Woodrow+Wilson+1912> (Accessed June 26, 2020).

¹⁹"Staunton is Ready," *Alexandria Gazette*.; "Bonfires Along Route," *Alexandria Gazette*.

²⁰"Staunton is Ready," *Alexandria Gazette*.

²¹*Ibid.*; "Wilson Guest of Native City," *The Evening News*, Vol. 26, Number 153. (Roanoke, Va.), 28 Dec. 1912. *Virginia Chronicle*. Library of Virginia. <https://viriniachronicle.com/?a=d&d=TVN19121228.1.1&srpos=10&e=27-12-1912-29-12-1912--en-20-1--txt-txIN+Staunton+Woodrow+Wilson> (Accessed June 26, 2020).; The official census of 1910 numbered the city at 10,604.

²²"Gov. Wilson Gets Ovation," and "Staunton in Holiday Attire," *Alexandria Gazette*, Volume 118, Number 278, 28 Dec. 1912. *Virginia Chronicle*. Library of Virginia. <https://viriniachronicle.com/?a=d&d=AG19121228.1.1&srpos=2&e=27-12-1912-29-12-1912--en-20-1--txt-txIN+Staunton+Woodrow+Wilson> (Accessed June 26, 2020).

²³"No Formality During Wilsons' Stay at Manse," *Staunton Daily Leader*, Vol. 18, No. 12, Dec 29th, (Staunton, Va.). in *Woodrow Wilson Papers: Series 7: Speeches, Writings, and Academic Material, -1923; Subseries A: Speeches, 1882 to 1923; 1912, Sept. 27-1916, Oct. 28. 1912. Manuscript/Mixed Material*. <https://www.loc.gov/item/mss4602900766/>. (Accessed June 21, 2020).

²⁴"Invitation to the People of Staunton to Welcome Woodrow Wilson to his Birth Home," No date, WWPL2362, Woodrow Wilson Presidential Library Photo Collection, *Woodrow Wilson Presidential Library & Museum, Staunton, Virginia*.

²⁵"Ready to Greet Wilson," *Alexandria Gazette*, Volume 118, Number 278, 28 Dec. 1912. *Virginia Chronicle*. Library of Virginia. <https://viriniachronicle.com/?a=d&d=AG19121228.1.1&srpos=2&e=27-12-1912-29-12-1912--en-20-1--txt-txIN+Staunton+Woodrow+Wilson> (Accessed June 26, 2020).

²⁶"Staunton is Ready," *Alexandria Gazette*.

²⁷"Will Start on Trip Tomorrow," *Alexandria Gazette*, Volume 118, Number 576, 26 Dec. 1912. *Virginia Chronicle*. Library of Virginia. <https://viriniachronicle.com/?a=d&d=AG19121226.1.1&srpos=86&e=191-en-20-81--txt-txIN-Staunton+Woodrow+Wilson+1912> (Accessed June 26, 2020).

²⁸"Celebration Woodrow Wilson Home Coming December 1912," Scrapbook Collection 22.; "Hearty Greeting Awaits Wilson," *Alexandria Gazette*.

²⁹"Makes No Speeches on Way to Staunton," *The Times Dispatch*, Vol 19, Number 213, (Richmond, Va.). 28 Dec. 1912. *Chronicle America: Historic American Newspapers*. Library of Congress. <<https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn85038615/1912-12-28/ed-1/seq-1/>> (Accessed June 24, 2020).

³⁰"Hearty Greeting Awaits Wilson," *Alexandria Gazette*; "Wilson Returns to His Old Home," *The Times Dispatch*, Vol 19, Number 213. (Richmond, Va.), 28 Dec. 1912. *Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers*. Library of Congress. <<https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn85038615/1912-12-28/ed-1/seq-1/>> (Accessed June 24, 2020).

³¹"Makes No Speeches," *Times Dispatch*.

³²*Ibid*.

³³"Wilson Inauguration to be as Simple as Possible," *The Evening News*, Vol. 26, Number 153, (Roanoke, Va.). 28 Dec. 1912. *Virginia Chronicle*. Library of Virginia. <https://viriniachronicle.com/?a=d&d=TVN19121228.1.1&srpos=10&e=27-12-1912-29-12-1912--en-20--1--txt-txIN+Staunton+Woodrow+Wilson-----> (Accessed June 24, 2020).

³⁴"Ready to Welcome President-Elect," *Alexandria Gazette*, Volume 118, Number 576, 26 Dec. 1912. *Virginia Chronicle*. Library of Virginia. <https://viriniachronicle.com/?a=d&d=AG19121226.1.1&srpos=86&e=-----191-en-20--81--txt-txIN+Staunton+Woodrow+Wilson+1912-----> (Accessed June 26, 2020); "Gov. Wilson Gets Ovation," *Alexandria Gazette*; "Hearty Greeting," *Alexandria Gazette*. Alexandria was a part of the 8th District.

³⁵"Wilson Returns to His Old Home," *The Times Dispatch*.

³⁶*Ibid*.

³⁷*Ibid*.

³⁸"Makes No Speeches," *The Times Dispatch*. Crozet is actually after the Charlottesville stop on the train route.

³⁹*Ibid*.

⁴⁰"Gov Wilson Gets Ovation," *Alexandria Gazette*.

⁴¹"Hearty Greeting Awaits Wilson," *Alexandria Gazette*.

⁴²"Woodrow Wilson Visit to Staunton," Scrapbook Collection 36, Family Cabinet 1912-1938. Woodrow Wilson Presidential Library Photo Collection. *Woodrow Wilson Presidential Library & Museum, Staunton, Virginia*.

⁴³*Ibid*; Gov Wilson Gets Ovation," *Alexandria Gazette*.

⁴⁴"Miscellaneous Memorabilia," MS480. Due to conflicting newspaper reports it is unclear if the band played as the train arrived into the station or as they left in the car.

⁴⁵"Gov Wilson Gets Ovation," *Alexandria Gazette*; "Wilson Returns," *The Times Dispatch*.

⁴⁶"Wilson in Staunton," Scrapbook Collection 21, Woodrow Wilson Presidential Scrapbook Collection. *Woodrow Wilson Presidential Library & Museum, Staunton, Virginia*.

⁴⁷"Wilson Returns," *The Times Dispatch*.

⁴⁸This quote was originally spoken during a virtual tour of the Manse by Cynthia Polhill the visitor service coordinator at the Wilson Museum and Library and then the full text was sent over email by special events coordinator Hunter Hanger. Polhill, Cynthia Polhill, *General Tour, Virtual Tour of Manse, Woodrow Wilson Museum and Library, Staunton, Virginia*. June 3, 2020.

⁴⁹The "Stonewall band" were nationally known and had previously played at the Washington Centennial, Chicago World Fair, McKinley's, Taft's and Cleveland's inaugural parades, and are currently self-described as the oldest, continuous local band in the nation.

⁵⁰Gov Wilson Gets Ovation," *Alexandria Gazette*.

⁵¹"Miscellaneous Memorabilia," MS480.

⁵²"Wilson Intended Visit to Staunton," *Alexandria Gazette*, Volume 118, Number 571, 19 Dec. 1912. *Virginia Chronicle*. Library of Virginia. <https://viriniachronicle.com/?a=d&d=AG19121219&e=-----191-en-20--41--txt-txIN+Staunton+Woodrow+Wilson+1912-----> (Accessed June 26, 2020).

⁵³Cooper, Wilson, 1; Baker, *Woodrow Wilson*, 428; "Wilson Review Great Parade," *The Times Dispatch*, Vol. 18, Number 21, (Richmond, Va.), 29 Dec. 1912. *Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers*, Library of Congress. <<https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn85038615/1912-12-29/ed-1/seq-1/>>. (Accessed June 26, 2020). There are numerous newspapers that repeat this claim and some even have it as there headline.

⁵⁴Cynthia Polhill, *General Tour, Virtual Tour of Manse, Woodrow Wilson Museum and Library, Staunton, Virginia*. June 3, 2020.

⁵⁵"What the President Ate When in Staunton," in "Miscellaneous Memorabilia," MS480.

⁵⁶"No Formality During Wilsons Stay at Manse," *Staunton Daily Leader*.

⁵⁷"Staunton's Distinguished Son Cheered on Ride to Review," *Staunton Daily Leader*, Vol. 18, No. 12, Dec. 29, 1912 (Staunton, Va.). in *Woodrow Wilson Papers: Series 7: Speeches, Writings, and Academic Material, -1923; Subseries A: Speeches, 1882 to 1923; 1912, Sept. 27-1916, Oct. 28. 1912. Manuscript/Mixed Material*. <https://www.loc.gov/item/mss4602900766/>. (Accessed June 21, 2020).

⁵⁸*Ibid*; "Woodrow Wilson Birthplace," Scrapbook Collection 17, Woodrow Wilson Presidential Scrapbook Collection. *Woodrow Wilson Presidential Library & Museum, Staunton, Virginia*.

⁵⁹"Staunton's Distinguished Son," *Staunton Daily Leader*.

⁶⁰"Staunton in Holiday Attire," *Alexandria Gazette*.

⁶¹McAdoo, *Wilsons*, 195.; Link, *Wilson*, 24-25.; Cooper, *Wilson*, 13.

⁶²McAdoo, *Wilsons*, 195.

⁶³Staunton, "Homecoming: Program," WWP22706.

⁶⁴"Miscellaneous Memorabilia," Box 1, Folder 6, MS480, Woodrow Wilson Presidential Library Manuscript Collection. *Woodrow Wilson Presidential Library & Museum, Staunton, Virginia*.

⁶⁵Troubetzkoy, *Staunton*, 96.

⁶⁶*Ibid.*, 74-76.

⁶⁷"Staunton's Distinguished Son," *Staunton Daily Leader*.; "Woodrow Wilson Visit to Staunton," Scrapbook Collection 36, Family Cabinet 1912-1938.

⁶⁸"Miscellaneous Memorabilia," Box 1, Folder 6, MS480.

⁶⁹"Beverly Street During Wilson's Visit," 1912 December 28, PC000101, Woodrow Wilson Presidential Library Postcard Collection, *Woodrow Wilson Presidential Library & Museum, Staunton, Virginia*.

⁷⁰"Wilson's Visit to Staunton," 1912 December 28, PC000102, Woodrow Wilson Presidential Library Postcard Collection, *Woodrow Wilson Presidential Library & Museum, Staunton, Virginia*.

⁷¹"State Prouder Than Ever of Illustrious Son," *The Times Dispatch*.

⁷²*Ibid.*; "Woodrow Wilson Visit to Staunton," Scrapbook Collection 36, Family Cabinet 1912-1938.; "Staunton's Distinguished Son," *Staunton Daily Leader*.; "Staunton is Ready," *Alexandria Gazette*.

⁷³"State Prouder Than Ever of Illustrious Son," *The Times Dispatch*.

⁷⁴"Woodrow Wilson Visit to Staunton," Scrapbook Collection 36, Family Cabinet 1912-1938.

⁷⁵"Staunton in Holiday Attire," *Alexandria Gazette*.

⁷⁶Link, *Wilson*, 24.; "Politics," *The Crises: Record of the Darker Races*, Vol. 5, No. 4. Feb. 1913, pg.167. *The Modernist Journal Project*. Brown and Tulsa Universities, (searchable database). <https://modjourn.org/issue/bdrf520168/> (Accessed June 20, 2020).; "Wilson Review Great Parade," *The Times Dispatch*.; Archivist Mark Peterson at the Wilson Library and Museum wrote a short but excellent piece about Frank Ware. Mark Edwin Peterson, *Frank T. Ware*, "Blog," Woodrow Wilson Museum and Library, Staunton, Virginia. September 6, 2019.

⁷⁷"Wilson in Staunton," Scrapbook Collection 21.; "What the President Ate When in Staunton," in "Miscellaneous Memorabilia," MS480.

⁷⁸"Woodrow Wilson Arrives at Mary Baldwin College," 1912 December 28, WWPL1228, Woodrow Wilson Presidential Library Photo Collection. *Woodrow Wilson Presidential Library & Museum, Staunton, Virginia*.; "Address of Welcome, Wilson Responding," *Staunton Daily Leader*.

⁷⁹The *Staunton Daily Leader* said crowds were estimated to be somewhere between 10,000 and 20,000 but this most likely is talking about attendance to the city which was closer to 20-25,000 people.

⁸⁰"Address of Welcome," *Staunton Daily Leader*.

⁸¹Baker, *Woodrow Wilson*, 429.

⁸²"Reunited Nation is Wilson's Hope," *The Times Dispatch*, Vol. 18, Number 21, (Richmond, Va.), 29 Dec. 1912. *Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers*, Library of Congress. <<https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn85038615/1912-12-29/ed-1/seq-1/>> (Accessed June 26, 2020). See *New Freedom* pages 18-21, 30, 197-199 for similar topics as discussed in the speech.

⁸³Patricia O'Toole's *The Moralist: Woodrow Wilson and the World He Made* expounds on this idea and explains it in assiduous detail.

⁸⁴All direct quotations in this paragraph were taken from: "An Address at Mary Baldwin Seminary, Staunton, Virginia," *The Papers of Woodrow Wilson Digital Edition*, (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, Rotunda, 2017). Originally published in *The Papers of Woodrow Wilson* © 1966–1994, Princeton University Press. <https://rotunda.upress.virginia.edu/founders/WILS-01-25-02-0356>. (Accessed June 10, 2020).

⁸⁵"Woodrow Wilson Visit to Staunton," Scrapbook Collection 36, Family Cabinet 1912-1938.

⁸⁶"Many Ladies Attend Reception to Mrs. Wilson," *Staunton Daily Leader*, Vol. 18, No. 12, Dec 29th, (Staunton, Va.), in *Woodrow Wilson Papers: Series 7: Speeches, Writings, and Academic Material, -1923; Subseries A: Speeches, 1882 to 1923; 1912, Sept. 27-1916, Oct. 28. 1912*. Manuscript/Mixed Material. <https://www.loc.gov/item/mss4602900766/>. (Accessed June 26, 2020). It was renamed Stuart Hall because the widow of Confederate General J.E.B Stuart served as headmistress of the school for two decades in the 1880s and 1890s.; Troubetzkoy, *Staunton*, 33.

⁸⁷"Many Ladies Attend Reception," *Staunton Daily Leader*.

⁸⁸"Visiting Bands Entertain Crowds," *Staunton Daily Leader*, Vol. 18, No. 12, Dec 29, (Staunton, Va.), in *Woodrow Wilson Papers: Series 7: Speeches, Writings, and Academic Material, -1923; Subseries A: Speeches, 1882 to 1923; 1912, Sept. 27-1916, Oct. 28. 1912*. Manuscript/Mixed Material. <https://www.loc.gov/item/mss4602900766/> (Accessed June 26, 2020).

⁸⁹Staunton, "Homecoming: Program," WWP22706.

⁹⁰"What the President Ate When in Staunton," in "Miscellaneous Memorabilia," MS480.

⁹¹*Staunton Daily Leader*, Dec 30, 1912 in Scrapbook 22, Box 1 Folder 3, "Celebration Woodrow Wilson

Home Coming December 1912," Scrapbook Collection 22. Woodrow Wilson Presidential Scrapbook Collection. *Woodrow Wilson Presidential Library & Museum, Staunton, Virginia*; "Wilson in Staunton," Scrapbook Collection 21.

⁹²Troubetzkoy, *Staunton*, 51.

⁹³"Features of Wilson Celebration," *Rockingham Daily Record*, Vol. 3, Number 89. (Harrisonburg, Va.) 30 Dec. 1912, WWPL2216, Woodrow Wilson Presidential Library Photo Collection. *Woodrow Wilson Presidential Library & Museum, Staunton, Virginia*; "Banquet Concludes with Celebration," *Staunton Daily Leader*, Vol. 18, No. 12, Dec 29, (Staunton, Va.), in *Woodrow Wilson Papers: Series 7: Speeches, Writings, and Academic Material, -1923; Subseries A: Speeches, 1882 to 1923; 1912, Sept. 27-1916, Oct. 28. 1912. Manuscript/Mixed Material*. <https://www.loc.gov/item/mss4602900766/> (Accessed June 26, 2020).

⁹⁴Alexander Forward, "Wilson Refers to Failure of Virginia to Support Him," *The Times Dispatch*, Vol. 18, Number 21, (Richmond, Va.), 29 Dec. 1912. *Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers*, Library of Congress. <<https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn85038615/1912-12-29/ed-1/seq-1/>> (Accessed June 23, 2020).

⁹⁵"Talks Politics," *Rockingham Daily Record*. Vol. 3, Number 89. (Harrisonburg, Va.) 30 Dec. 1912. WWPL2216, Woodrow Wilson Presidential Library Photo Collection. *Woodrow Wilson Presidential Library & Museum, Staunton, Virginia*.

⁹⁶"Menu of Woodrow Wilson's 56th Birthday Dinner," 1912 December 28, WWPL2177, Woodrow Wilson Presidential Library Photo Collection. *Woodrow Wilson Presidential Library & Museum, Staunton, Virginia*; "Woodrow Wilson Birthplace," Scrapbook Collection 17. For more about the food served see this blog done by a Woodrow Wilson intern: Hayley Moore, "Happy Birthday, Mr. President", Woodrow Wilson Presidential Library Blog, June 24, 2016. <https://wwplblog.wordpress.com/2016/06/24/happy-birthday-mr-president/>.

⁹⁷"Banquet Concludes Wilson Celebration," *Daily Staunton Leader*.

⁹⁸"Reunited Country is Wilson's Hope," *The Times Dispatch*. The toastmaster was Allen Braxton, a lawyer who practiced in both Staunton and Richmond.

⁹⁹"An Address at a Birthday Banquet in Staunton Virginia," *The Papers of Woodrow Wilson Digital Edition*, (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, Rotunda, 2017). Originally published in *The Papers of Woodrow Wilson* © 1966-1994, Princeton University Press. <https://rotunda.upress.virginia.edu/founders/WILS-01-25-02-0357> (Accessed June 14, 2020). Wilson spoke about a bill being put forth in congress with representative William Jones of Virginia on the way down in the train that would expediate the process for Philippine independence.

¹⁰⁰Woodrow Wilson, "Woodrow Wilson to Richard Heath Dabney," 1913 January 7, WWP20478. University of Virginia Woodrow Wilson Letters. *Woodrow Wilson Presidential Library & Museum, Staunton, Virginia*.

¹⁰¹"An Address at a Birthday Banquet in Staunton Virginia," *The Papers of Woodrow Wilson Digital Edition*.

¹⁰²Alexander Forward, "Folks Back Home Weigh Heavily in Breaking Long Deadlock," *The Times Dispatch*. (Richmond, Va.), 03 July 1912. *Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers*. Library of Congress. <<https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn85038615/1912-07-03/ed-1/seq-8/>> (Accessed June 26, 2020). For a full account of the 1912 Democratic Convention see: Link, Arthur S. "The Baltimore Convention of 1912," *The American Historical Review* 50, no. 4 (1945): 691-713.

¹⁰³"An Address at a Birthday Banquet in Staunton Virginia," *The Papers of Woodrow Wilson Digital Edition*.

¹⁰⁴Wilson, "Woodrow Wilson to Richard Heath Dabney," WWP20478.

¹⁰⁵Forward, "Wilson Refers to Failure," *The Times Dispatch*.

¹⁰⁶"Trip Did Gov Wilson Good," *Rockingham Daily Record*.

¹⁰⁷"Nearly Hundred Thousand Words in City Press," *Staunton Daily Leader*, Dec 30, 1912 in "Miscellaneous Memorabilia," Box 1, Folder 5. MS480, Woodrow Wilson Presidential Library Manuscript Collection. *Woodrow Wilson Presidential Library & Museum, Staunton, Virginia*.

¹⁰⁸"Features of Wilson Celebration," and "Leaves for Home" in *Rockingham Daily Record*, Vol. 3, Number 89. (Harrisonburg, Va.) 30 Dec. 1912. WWPL2216, Woodrow Wilson Presidential Library Photo Collection. *Woodrow Wilson Presidential Library & Museum, Staunton, Virginia*; "Wilson Guest of Native City Today," *The Evening News*.

¹⁰⁹"Newspaper Men are Well Pleased," *Staunton Daily Leader*, Vol. 18, No. 12, Dec 29, (Staunton, Va.), in *Woodrow Wilson Papers: Series 7: Speeches, Writings, and Academic Material, -1923; Subseries A: Speeches, 1882 to 1923; 1912, Sept. 27-1916, Oct. 28. 1912. Manuscript/Mixed Material*. <https://www.loc.gov/item/mss4602900766/> (Accessed June 26, 2020).

¹¹⁰"State Prouder than Ever of its Illustrious Son," *The Times Dispatch*.

¹¹¹Woodrow Wilson, "Woodrow Wilson to Martin H. Wayt," 1913 January 3, WWP22708, Woodrow Wilson Presidential Library Manuscript Collection. *Woodrow Wilson Presidential Library & Museum, Staunton, Virginia*; "Trip Did Gov Wilson Good," *Rockingham Daily Record*.

Mt. Sidney Antiques History for Sale

By Douglas W. Tees

***Editor's Note:** Doug Tees, CFP®, graduated from James Madison University (JMU) in 1995 with a dual major in psychology and anthropology. In his senior year of college he worked as a house painter, during which time he had the good fortune of meeting McCoy Hill, the owner of Mt. Sidney Antiques. Tees was fascinated by McCoy's story and background, which led him to write the paper, "Mt Sidney Antiques: History for Sale," as the final paper for his capstone course in anthropology. After graduation, Tees worked in social services with developmentally disabled and mentally ill clients for four years before pursuing his MBA at Indiana University. After several years with Deloitte Consulting in Cincinnati, Ohio, he moved into financial services and now resides in northern Virginia with his wife Deb (whom he met at JMU) and two sons. In 2017, Tees joined the Jason Howell Company, a Registered Investment Advisor and is now a partner, COO, and Director of Financial Planning.*

Acknowledgment

I would like to take this time to give my warmest thanks to McCoy Hill without whom this project would not have been possible. Hill has unselfishly granted me his time and information that only he could provide. Thank you so much for your time and efforts. I greatly appreciate all that you have done to aid me in this project.

Prologue

McCoy Hill is an antique dealer in the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia. He runs Mt. Sidney Antiques, a shop located in the small town of Mt. Sidney, Virginia (in northern Augusta County). He has had this shop, in one form or another, for the last twenty-five years. Hill is a retired government worker who is now a full-time antique dealer.

I met Hill during the fall of 1994 when I was helping a friend with his student painting business. Hill had requested that both his shop building and the addition to his home be painted. Both buildings were on the same property, and as I spent time after classes and on weekends painting, I got to talk to Hill. After speaking to him a couple of times I grew to like him

very much. He seemed to have a way with people. He knows how to make people feel comfortable and he could draw them into a conversation with ease (even if they knew that they should be working). He is a fascinating person who has led a very interesting life, and one he is willing to share.

Over the course of the time I spent painting, I took a look at what his shop had to offer. I have always been interested in antiques and I was fascinated by many of the items he had on display. Throughout my childhood I had been an avid collector of anything I could get my hands on. I have collected everything from cans and bottles to rocks and minerals. I still actively collect coins and stamps and I am drawn to both the old and the rare. I have been interested in antiques since I was very young and find that I am intrigued by their craftsmanship, age, and mystique.

Spring semester 1995 brought the class for which I have written this paper. I was instructed to go into the community surrounding James Madison University to conduct research on a business on which I was to write an ethnography. I thought of Hill and his antique shop almost immediately. I was excited at the prospect of learning more about him and the antique business. I approached him with what I knew of the project and he agreed to help out in any way he could. Throughout my research he has done just that. He has provided a great deal of time and effort to help me prepare this ethnography. He has been a tremendous help and I cannot imagine having done research with anyone else.

In this ethnography I will take a standard interpretive approach where I will use Hill's words to explain what it is like to be an antique dealer in the Shenandoah Valley. I will also attempt to interpret and explain why he does what he does. I gathered the information for his ethnography in a series of interviews and a number of visits to Hill's antique shop. At first, these interviews were relatively unstructured while Hill discussed the many aspects of this business and his life. As time went on, I found that it was necessary to prepare specific questions in order to gain a deeper understanding of the many areas of interest.

Through this ethnography, it is my purpose to acquaint the reader with a general understanding of antiques and the sales of antiques, as well as with a specific understanding of Hill's shop here in the Shenandoah Valley. I would like to provide the reader with an accurate portrayal of Hill's life so that readers can find themselves transported into McCoy Hill's world.



The Mt. Sidney home and shop of McCoy Hill

Getting Started

In the early 1970s, McCoy Hill was working for the government as a hospital planner in Washington, D.C. His office was about one block away from an old run-down building on Pennsylvania Avenue. The building was the Willard Hotel, and it was scheduled for gutting. At the same time, Hill was renovating his home in Mt Sidney in the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia. His house was built in the early nineteenth century during the Federal period, and Hill decided that he wanted to restore his home with materials from that time period

Hill would go to the Willard Hotel at night and on weekends to salvage brass locks, hinges, and fixtures. He used these items to restore his home and he put the extra pieces out on his front porch in Mt. Sidney to sell. These pieces sold very well. He said that it was at this point that he realized that there was real money involved in what he was doing.

When he saw how well the architectural items went, Hill decided to purchase the hotel's china. He bought over three thousand pieces, which he displayed on his porch and advertised in magazines. The orders came rolling in and he was able to sell all of the china at a very good profit. He made enough, in fact, to finance a trip to England.

While he was in England, McCoy bought some antiques and brought them back to see how they would do on his front porch in Mt. Sidney. Once again, they sold very well.

Hill also mentioned that his apartment in Washington, D.C. was conveniently located across the street from Goodwill. He said that he would check the store twice a day - once at lunch, and once after work. He placed these items that he found there with the others on his front porch for sale.

Hill told me that his involvement in antiques and the antique business was a gradual process. He continued to sell his antiques part time until his retirement, at which time he became a full-time dealer. He has mentioned to me many times exactly what it takes to start your own antique business. He said, "All it takes is fifteen dollars for a business license and a sign out front."

Mt. Sidney Antiques; A Sign Out Front

Mt. Sidney Antiques is located in the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia. This area of Virginia has a generally low cost of living when compared with the cities of Virginia, but can by no means can the area be described as poor. Mt. Sidney Antiques is one of five antique shops within walking distance of each other, and only one of many in the valley.

Hill's antique shop is located in the middle of the very small and very old

town of Mt. Sidney. This town is cut in half by Route 11 which runs parallel to I-81. The front of each property is only a few feet away from the road. Hill's red, white, and blue flag, with black letters spelling "Antiques" written on it, can be seen hanging extended over the shoulder of the road. Upon seeing this sign, a customer is directed up a gravel driveway between Hill's home and that of his neighbor to a small gravel lot that has a capacity of three or four cars.

Once the customer has parked, a long red building can be seen. This is the main shop. To the right is Hill's house with the addition that is used as a second show room for the antiques. The red building has a door in the center, a garage-like door on the left, and a window to the right. The portion of the red building with the garage-like door is walled off from the rest of the building on the inside. This section takes up about one third of the whole building and houses Hill's workshop.

Hill uses his workshop to repair and refinish some of the antiques that he purchases. In the workshop are some basic tools including a table saw, a lathe, and miscellaneous hand tools. Many dealers, including Hill, look for neglected furniture that they can restore. Dealers can buy this furniture for much less and realize a greater margin of profit.

The other two thirds of the red building is devoted to housing a great deal of Hill's antiques. The doorway leads to a small room that contains oil lamps, books, paintings, small pieces of furniture, and other items spread out on the floor and hanging from hooks on the walls. This room is connected by a doorway to a second room one step above the first. In this room, there are several pieces of furniture, more books, paintings on the walls, glassware, contemporary Russian folk art, and a large glass display case and counter with an antique cash register on it. Inside the display case are different pieces of jewelry, small items, and other valuables.

The second area that Hill uses for show rooms includes one room of an addition to his house and one room of the original structure. In these rooms he has large furniture, clocks, several paintings, and some other small items (0).

Hill fills his shop with what he calls "Items of utility," or "the basics." These items include tables, chairs, and beds. This includes the furniture that everyone must have in their home. This furniture is mostly Victorian and was crafted around the middle of the nineteenth century. He also has a limited inventory of glass, china, small accessories, clocks, lamps, textiles, and folk art. All of these items help to round out his shop and to cater to a larger number of customers.

I found in some of my library research that dealers often have a wide range of items for sale in their shops. In one article on a New York shop, the

owner said, “from picture frames to match strikers. We hit all the bases. Perhaps that is why we’re a success;”(1984:44). This dealer, like Hill, finds it advantageous, and perhaps necessary, to carry a wide range of antiques and collectibles to appeal to the customers’ wide range of interests.

What is an Antique?

The *American Heritage Dictionary* defines an antique as: "An object having special value because of its age, especially a work of art or handicraft that is more than one hundred years old"(1982:116). This benchmark of one hundred years is also what the United States Customs uses for imported items. Antiques that are purchased outside of the United States borders and then brought in are not subject to taxation.

Some items found in antique shops are not one hundred years old or older and these are often referred to as “semi-antique.” These “semi-antiques” are sometimes spoken of as coming from a particular time frame. They are often referred to as either art deco or depression pieces.

The more valuable antiques are pieces that have been kept in good condition and have all the original metal work. The only problem with such a perfect piece is that the dealer has to pay top dollar for it and can make very little on a mark-up. The big money is in the pieces that have been slightly neglected but can be repaired without obvious rework.

Two things were pointed out to me as important when fixing up a neglected antique. I will use the example of a piece that dates from the eighteenth century. First of all, the finish of a piece is very important, and any visible restoration will take away from the value of the piece. If the original finish is removed or compromised in any way, the antique will be substantially devalued. The original finish is discernible by its patina. An antique’s patina is the worn soft look that an older piece has as opposed to a new varnishy look of more recent finishes. Hill said that the trained eye of a dealer can pick out this “patina” look very easily.

The second area to be aware of when restoring a period antique is the brass work. The original brass work adds a great deal of value to a piece. This value comes from having a completely intact piece that had every part picked out and assembled by the original craftsman. If the brass work is replaced, the piece could lose between twenty and thirty percent of its value.

It is also important for both the dealer and the consumer to be aware that for every original hand crafted piece there are dozens of manufactured copies. Because some of these copies are themselves over one hundred years old, sometimes they too have the worn patina look. The important thing to note is that craftsmanship is also a factor in making an antique



Interior views of McCoy Hill's antique shop



valuable. A valuable antique did not roll off of an assembly line; it was hand-made by a talented craftsman.

Some reproductions were made of vintage wood in the early part of this century so that it is almost impossible to tell the difference between the two hundred year old original and the one hundred year old copy. A very good copy of a period piece is often called a “centennial” or a “turn of the century” piece. In the end it is the uneducated consumer who depends on the knowledge and integrity of the dealer. It is important for both the consumer and the dealer to get items of great value appraised so that each is sure of what they have.

Research led me to find two authors who discussed the issue of fraud in dealing with antiques. Both Dorn and Cole bring up the importance of being aware of the possibility of fraud. Cole appeared more optimistic in her interpretation of a very few dishonest dealers who were making a bad name for the others—the old “one rotten apple in the barrel ruining the rest” story. Cole suggests that the older the shop is, the more likely the owner is to be honest. She believes that a shop that misrepresents its products will quickly fold, because dishonest dealers cannot get away with those practices for long. Dorn, on the other hand, is more pessimistic in her views on dealers and buyers. She said that everyone is after the largest profit or the greatest savings, so one should almost expect dishonesty. Whether an individual feels that someone is steering them wrong or not, when dealing with a lot of money, it is always wise to have the antique appraised.

Furniture is not the only thing that antique dealers offer. Many dealers also sell and even specialize in collectibles. Collectibles include stamps, coins, prints, toys, political items, marbles, and a host of other items. For something to be valued as a collectible, the only necessary conditions are that there is more than one of them and someone wants them.

Dealing in collectibles has many advantages. First of all, because most collectibles are small and portable, dealers are able to set up booths at fairs and conventions. This means that the dealers can go to the customers instead of having the customers come to them. Dealers can save a great deal of money if they do not have to pay for a physical location to house and sell their wares.

Another advantage to dealing in collectibles is that collectors will pay just about any amount of money in order to complete a set. There is a great deal of money involved in many collectibles including stamps and toys.

What's Hot in the Valley

What items sell best often depends upon geographic location. For example, the houses of a certain area come from a particular time period, and individuals wish to restore them to be consistent with that time period. Another reason a particular area may value a piece could be due to a historical tie between the area and the piece. Often if a particular piece of furniture was crafted in or near the area in which collectors reside, they place more value on that piece.

Here in the Shenandoah Valley, there is one item in particular that gives an example of regional value. The pie safe is a piece of furniture that was kept out on the back porch of homes. The pie safe was a covered cupboard that was used to keep insects out of food. They were handmade and differ in design from place to place. The most valuable pie safes come from Wythe County in Virginia. The Wythe County pie safe has some distinctive features that make it sell for between four and five thousand dollars.

Not only are particular kinds of furniture valued in different areas, but certain woods are also preferred. In the Shenandoah Valley, the favorite woods, in order of preference, are walnut, cherry, and oak. Hill has found this preferred order after years of experience here in the Valley.

Another geographic area that Hill has a great deal of knowledge about is Maine, as a result of his frequent buying trips there. Maine generally prefers different woods than the Shenandoah Valley. Maine prefers tiger maple, ash, and birch. Due to the difference in preference, Hill can often purchase pieces of furniture in Maine for a small amount and then sell them for a large profit in the Valley.

Where do Dealers Shop?

Dealers will often go out of state to purchase items, taking advantage of the regional value of pieces all across the country. Hill says that many dealers from Texas and Florida frequent shops in the Valley to get deals on items that bring in much more money in those states. For the same reason, Hill travels to Maine to find bargains. According to Hill's estimate, nearly thirty percent of his sales are to other dealers. Another good reason for the large number of dealer to dealer sales is that items bought for resale are tax exempt so dealers are able to purchase without Uncle Sam's mark-up.

A good example of the frequent dealer to dealer sales can be seen in a story told by Hill. This example also shows how region affects the value of the piece. He had purchased a chest of drawers from a dealer in Maine

and brought it to his shop in Mt. Sidney. A dealer from Chapel Hill, North Carolina, purchased the chest from him. He later found out that the dealer sold the chest to another dealer in New Orleans and as far as he knows, it could now be found in a shop on the West coast. This particular item was purchased in Maine by Hill, who was able to buy it at a good price there due to both the economy of the region and the popularity of the item. Hill was able to sell the chest for a profit to a dealer in North Carolina. The dealer from North Carolina, with all probability, also sold the item for a profit. The dealer in North Carolina was able to do this because Chapel Hill is more affluent than the valley and the market there will bear much higher prices.

Aside from purchasing items from other dealers, shop owners use a variety of resources to stock their shelves. A popular avenue of making purchases is that of auctions. Auctions take place frequently and are advertised in the circulars and magazine dedicated to antiques. If a person knows where to look, two or three can be found every weekend.

There are two kinds of auctions. The first type of auction is referred to as an "absolute" auction. By absolute, it is implied that every item is sold as soon as there is a bid. In the other kind of auction, there may be specific prices that the seller has set for items to sell for, and will not part with them for any less. In this kind of auction, if the item does not get the amount desired, the auctioneer says to "set it back" which effectively pulls the item from sale. In this type of auction it is very difficult to get a deal, because each item has a target price.

In absolute auctions, on the other hand, the item is sold as soon as one person bids on it. The only thing unknown is to whom and for how much. It is the auctioneer's job to get others to bid greater and greater amounts for the item. Here in the valley there is an auction that is held about once a month. The Green Valley Auction (also the Green Valley Book Fair) holds absolute auctions regularly.

Some of the more ideal auctions are called farm sales or estate auctions that take place at the original site. Sometimes these sales go room by room through a house and auction off every single thing in each. In these circumstances there are often relatives who are interested in some items from the estate. These individuals can be an excellent source of information about the history of certain pieces and can provide other very interesting information to the buyer. To know the history of a piece increases its value, and collectors will often write down historical information and keep it with the antique.



Interior views of McCoy Hill's antique shop



An auction can provide the general public, even more than dealers, with great bargains. This is true because dealers will buy items from which they hope to make about a one hundred percent profit. If the public knows who the dealers are, they can bid slightly more than them, reducing the margin of profit for the dealer so it is no longer worthwhile, and still make a great buy. Auctions also serve as social affairs. Often times a church group will serve food and beverages and the whole community may take part.

Similar to an auction is a "tag sale". A "tag sale" occurs when an individual or group goes through a house or an estate and tags each individual item for sale with a set price. Sometimes a building is rented and tagged items are brought there for sale. This type of sale is not very popular because it lacks the excitement and the possibility of getting a steal that an auction offers.

Another source available to dealers are individuals called "pickers." Pickers are people who go out to find and buy antiques for the sole purpose of selling them to dealers. These individuals will take their van or truck to less wealthy communities and spread word that they are interested in particular items. The picker often knows what items a dealer wants and will go out looking for those specific pieces. Some pickers become very good at what they do and quite knowledgeable about antiques. Many can "pick" as their sole source of income.

Hill does not use pickers because he says that it takes the fun out of being an antique dealer. Hill likes to go on trips and find his own antiques. He says that the fun part of the business is buying and traveling. If he were to spend his money in Virginia he would not be able to afford a trip to New England.

Sales by consignment offer dealers a risk free way to make money. Sometimes individuals in the community wish to use an established antique shop to sell items that they own. Dealers like Hill accept these items and put them on display in their shop. The dealer has put no cash out for this item that is on his floor and if the item is sold the dealer is given twenty percent of the price as a fee. The dealer definitely benefits from providing this service to the community. By not putting capital into some of the pieces in the shop, the dealer frees up money to purchase other antiques or help make ends meet.

There are still other sources available to the industrious antique dealer. The dealer may find items in a Salvation Army, or Goodwill store, the classified ads, radio advertisements, and yard sales.

No matter where dealers shop they are always looking for deals. The best deals are referred to as "sleepers." A sleeper is an item that is for sale at such a low rate that the seller must now know the true value of the

piece. Seasoned dealers will prey upon those who are less knowledgeable. This predatory view of dealers often gives them a bad name.

Hill believes that thanks to publications and price guides there is much less chance of someone being taken advantage of. Even beginners are more savvy and prepared to buy and sell.

There was only one instance of a sleeper being taken from Hill that he is aware of. He was on a trip to New England and he stopped at a yard sale to look over what items were available. By chance he saw that there was a first edition copy of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* that he purchased for twenty dollars. Hill put the two volume set on his shelf in Mt. Sidney for forty-five dollars, the standard one hundred percent mark-up. A local dealer who was much more knowledgeable about books saw the volumes in Hill's shop. The gentleman then inquired about the price and asked if he could get a dealer's discount. It is common for dealers to give one another discounts so Hill gave the books to him for thirty-five dollars.

About two weeks after the books were sold, a gentleman came into Mt. Sidney Antiques and was browsing around the shop. Hill always initiates conversation with his customers so it was no surprise that the two of them began talking. In the course of the conversation the man mentioned that he had stopped in to the other dealer's shop and found quite a bargain. He said that he found an original printing of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* for only \$2,200. When Hill heard this he knew that he had been taken and he definitely did not like the feeling.

Hill said that if he had found out that the item was worth as much as it was he would have shared his good fortune with the woman who sold the copies to him. Even though just about anyone would say that they would share the wealth, I sincerely believe it to be true in Hill's case. In the time that I have known him I have been impressed with his integrity and generosity.

In the instance of losing the sleeper, the part that most upset Hill was not that he did not realize the value of the books (although I am sure it did a little). What upset him was that the other dealer, who knew he was getting a steal, still asked for a discount on the purchase. Hill has never told the other dealer that he found out about the sale, but he has since purchased a price guide for antique books.

A final place where the dealer can shop for antiques is in present day collectibles. This is the idea of buying the valuable antiques and collectibles of tomorrow today, and storing them until they have achieved a greater value. Hill says that there are few items that are produced today that will

be considered antique in the future because most items are manufactured instead of hand crafted. Previously, most antiques were hand-made.

Collectibles will bring in most of the money in the future. One example may be promotional items associated with places such as McDonalds, like the toys that come with a kid's meal and even the boxes those meals come in. Another example is the Barbie doll. Each year a new Barbie comes out with a new theme and dress.

Trying to figure out what will be valuable in the future is, in the end, a matter of guesswork. There is no way of knowing what will make a hit. A few examples of past hits include the Beatles lunch box, Log Cabin tin syrup dispensers in the shape of log cabins, and milk bottles from specific dairies. Many dealers stash items away on a hunch and hope that they will pay off. Hill says that if you have the space it may prove a worthwhile investment to stash a few items away in the hopes that they will become valuable collector items.

Some items which may prove to be future hits, according to Hill, include movie posters, and E.T. collectibles, Desert Storm collector cards, and many advertisements. People with extra attic space (if there is such a thing) should think about stashing such items away as an investment for the collectors and dealers of the future.

Customer Relations

An aspect of antique sales discussed in several books dealt with the customer's desire to haggle. Cole quotes a shop owner as saying, "I price as fairly as I can, and I hope my goods are worth what I ask for them. Customers who try to beat me down wouldn't do it in another kind of store " (1961:27). Even with the obvious dislike of haggling by dealers, Cole still suggests that the informed buyer should ask if the price on the piece is the best that the dealer can do.

A different tact was taken by Dorn. She said that in response to the question of a lower price, "Some dealers react resentfully and stubbornly to the implication that their prices are unreasonably high" (1974:36). Dorn seems to think that the dealer should expect to haggle, and that it is part of the business.

Hill considers haggling to be an unfortunate element of the antique business and is, in his opinion, unprofessional. Haggling is one of the more controversial aspects of the antique business. Arguing over the price of an item has its origins in the bazaars of Middle Eastern countries and Europe. Many dealers, including Hill, find haggling not to be in their best interest.

In response to the pervasive desire of customers to haggle, antique



Interior views of McCoy Hill's antique shop



dealers have been forced to come up with a solution. Hill, like many others, marks an item at a higher price than he actually wants. He does this so that when a customer asks for the item for less, he can wheel and deal with them. This is necessary because some customers will not do business with a dealer who does not haggle. The common markup for an item is about ten percent. The problem with this practice is that the rare uninformed customer can get stuck paying more for an item than it is really worth. When Hill comes across this infrequent customer he extends them a discount. This discount has two effects. First, it make the deal fair and no one is taken advantage of. Second, giving customers a deal on an antique often firms their commitment to buy that antique.

There are some dealers who seem to enjoy the haggling process more than others and may inflate their prices between fifty and one hundred percent. Hill does not partake in this practice of price over-inflation because, he said, "I like to sleep at night." The dealers that raise their prices such a large amount cause problems. They overcharge many patrons for antiques. They also set bad precedents for other dealers. Customers who haggle with a dealer who raised his price one hundred percent may expect to get another huge discount at the next shop they visit.

It is fascinating to watch different customers attempt to engage the dealer in the haggling process. Some customers will come straight out and say, "What is the least you will take for this?" Others just outright offer an amount. This is sometimes very disturbing to a dealer, especially if the amount offered is close to what the dealer paid for the item.

Unfortunately, according to Hill, haggling will always be a part of the antique business. In response to the customer's desire to haggle, some dealers have set what they call "firm" prices. When an item is marked with a price and the word firm is written underneath, it is obvious that there will be no quibbling over the amount to be paid.

Setting prices depends on a host of things. It is important that a dealer has a realistic view of the value of an object. Price guides often provide a range of amounts that a dealer can expect a particular piece to bring. By no means are the amounts found in price guides set in stone. Also, a dealer bases what they charge on their previous experiences attending auctions and in making purchases. Often, if dealers followed a price guide, they would be asking either too much or too little for an antique.

Hill tends to price an item high in order to see what the market will bear. If the item does not sell he lowers it to see if it will sell at a reduced

price. Frequently, an antique's price is reduced to ensure that the shop has a decent turnover. After an item has spent a long time on the floor of his shop, Hill is happy just to get his original investment back. As far as Hill is concerned, nothing is more upsetting than to have a customer remind him that he has had an item for a long period of time and should therefore give a drastic reduction in price.

The typical customers that find their way into Mt. Sidney Antiques often have several characteristics in common. The average customers appreciate the unique crafting of antiques and they appreciate the unique crafting of antiques and they appreciate the intricate features of handmade furniture that do not exist today. The customers value the skills that went into the hand crafting of antiques. Despite the beauty of the antique, these customers also find that they are making an investment. They know that they can receive at least as much as they paid if they choose to sell.

There are other types of customers as well. There is the collector type who is a person that is very interested in a specific kind of item. There is no telling what a collector may be interested in because there is such a wide range of collectibles on the market.

Another type of customer was looked down upon in the library research that I found. There was a general distaste for the "browser." A browser is a customer who comes in off the street just to take a look. The dealers expressed disapproval of the people that were uneducated about antiques and who used the antique shops as museums. These individuals never attempt to buy anything and often laugh at what they consider to be outrageous prices. Cole discusses the trend of making the shop open "by appointment only" to insure the operator deals with only the most serious customers.

Hill does not feel this way at all. This is made obvious by the sign at the end of his drive stating "Browsers Welcome." He believes that these customers, after checking you out, may purchase an item that they had never thought they were interested in before. Even if they do not make a purchase, it makes sense that perhaps their slight interest now will spark a future collector. The dealer has nothing to lose by allowing people to browse, and, potentially, a great deal to gain.

Interesting people from all walks of life have browsed and made purchases in Hill's shop. Some of the more interesting customers have been Japanese diplomats from the embassy in Washington D.C., an antique dealer from Kodiak, Alaska, the former president of Costa Rica, and a federal judge, just to name a few. If the person is not recognizable right away, there

are often other ways of finding out. Most people who buy items from a dealer pay by check and there is great deal of information that can be gathered from a check. A check tells where a person is from, if they are a doctor or a lawyer, and, if they happen to have a specially designed check, it can tell a little about their personality.

Many of the customers that come in to Mt. Sidney Antiques are traveling. Special events that occur either north or south of the Shenandoah Valley bring in big business. The Statler Brothers used to play a concert once a year at the Fourth of July in Staunton and for a week before the concert their fans would come rolling in. Many of the concert goers would stop off to check out the antique shops along the way.

Another lucrative time for Hill is during the Sugar Maple Festival that occurs in Monterey each year during March. People also come in on the way to or from their ski trips or vacations to Bryce Mountain and Massanutten. The parents of many college students located in the area frequent the antique shops during both graduation and parents' weekend. Other customers come from areas like Charlottesville because the prices tend to be much lower on Mt. Sidney's side of the mountains.

In order to keep customer relations in a good light, the dealer should always describe the antique on the sales slip. Hill often mentions the wood, the style, its age, and the origin of the piece if it is known. The purchase is an investment by the customer, as it is wise for the consumer to have all of the pertinent information on the bill of sale. Information on the origin of an antique gives the customer a sense of nostalgia associated with the piece. It is fun to know where an antique came from and where it has been. The slip of paper with the information on it will often remain somehow attached to the antique.

Dealer Relations

One of the more surprising things that I found in my time with Hill was how well antique dealers get along. The antique business is unlike any other in that there is little or no competition. The reason that there is no competition in the antique business is that no two antique shops are alike. No two shops will provide the same types of antiques or collectibles.

In Mt. Sidney, where Hill's shop is located, there is a cluster of five shops within walking distance of one another. Instead of worrying about competition, Hill is pleased that they are there. Having all five shops so close together is of benefit to all of them. Travelers on U.S. Rt. 11 are much more likely to stop and explore a group of shops than they would be if there was only one.

Not only is there no animosity between dealers, but they also try to help one another out. If customers are looking for any particular items, which Hill does not have, he will refer those customers to another shop that could better suit their needs. Even when customers do not mention looking for specific items, Hill will ask if they have stopped by one place or another.

Dealers get along so well, in fact, that many have bound together to form antique "malls." These malls contain many independent dealers who come together for the benefit of having a large inventory to attract customers. Some malls are run by a manager who will sell items for the dealers. In these malls, it is not necessary for the dealers to be present and they are only required to pay rent for the space they use to stock their own items. Many malls do not take commission on sales. The management takes care of all sales and keeps track of all items with the use of a computer.

The mall is ideal for dealers who are just starting out. Because they do not have to be present, they can keep their jobs and still sell their antiques. New dealers also benefit from the low start-up cost that the mall offers. They do not have to pay for an establishment of their own or worry about advertising because all of that is taken care of by the mall owners. There is no way that a dealer could set up shop for less than the cost of joining a mall. The malls enable dealers to become established without being there and without affecting their permanent positions.

There is one major drawback to the mall concept. This drawback comes from the lack of contact between the dealer who acquired the items and the customer. It is not possible for a customer to get background information about a piece purchased in a mall from a manager who was not involved in the acquisition.

The antique business has grown by leaps and bounds in the last twenty years. Much of this growth is due to the antique malls. Most dealers start out small, maybe just on weekends and at fairs. Then many become more interested and move into a mall setting and get more involved in the business. Some use the malls as a way to become established and gain a reputation before setting up their own shop.

According to Hill's estimate, there are over two hundred antique dealers in the Shenandoah Valley between Harrisonburg and Staunton. Most of these dealers are found in the group settings of antique malls. The concentration of dealers in such a small region has brought in more customers for each shop. In short, the more dealers, the more customers.

What's in it for Hill?

Aside from the factor of profit, or, in Hill's words, "good gravy money," the antique business offers Hill a great deal. Perhaps the part of the business that Hill enjoys the most is the ability to travel. He says that he would rather be traveling and looking for antiques than selling what he already has. He makes frequent trips to New England, especially Maine, in order to restock his shop. It is the experience of traveling and buying that is a thrill for Hill.

Within the last two years Hill has expanded his travel horizons. He has now expanded his buying sources to include Russia. In Russia, Hill is buying contemporary folk art including hand-painted broaches, jewelry boxes, eggs, and matryoshka nests of dolls. He has made five trips to Russia in the last two years and plans to take yet another in a short time. Hill has been able to keep going back because the items he has brought back with him have sold successfully.

Another reason for his frequent trips, both inside and outside of the United States, is that they are business expenses and, therefore, tax deductible. Hill appreciates the antique business because it is very rare that a self-employed business allows the owner to travel so often.

A second aspect of the antique business that is especially appealing to Hill is the hunt for something that is rare or unusual. An article written by Nancy Richardson discussed the partnership of two antique dealers. Richardson found that the two men would "still rather sell the unusual than the predictable" (1984:64). Hill, like the men in the article, enjoys the unique. He is also attracted to the items he buys that add to the enjoyment of acquiring them. Antique collecting represents a healthy addiction for him, an addiction which he does not plan to quit. Hill said that he has never met a completely retired dealer. Buying antiques is an addiction for Hill and for other dealers like him. He says that he does not know what he would be doing with his time if he did not buy and sell antiques.

Conclusion

Every antique dealer has a different story and a different slant on business. This, in itself, makes the field interesting. Different dealers would have felt that different information was relevant and important. Hill provided thoughts and information that are unique to him and his shop. This information can, however, still be used to help understand antique dealers and shops everywhere.

The antique dealer's role in the community can be seen as a keeper of the history. Hill has detailed information about building techniques and art forms that have not been practiced for hundreds of years. He values the things of the past and provides a link for his customers to a different time. Antique dealers do not only sell items in their shops, but also the history that created them.

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The Lofton Farm Anvil

By David McCaskey

***Editor's Note:** As always we are grateful to David McCaskey for his unique and personal insights into local history. This story about the anvil in his family's barn and the very personal family story that has been passed down through the family for 150 years reminds us very much of the very origins of the word "his" and "story".*

As a child I was sitting on the high sill of the tank house doorway with my Uncle Frank Hess, the battered farm anvil between us – my Grandfather had lifted it up there for the season's frequent task of riveting new teeth onto the sickle bar mower. Uncle Frank recalled:

"One late afternoon the Yankees rode in, a whole bunch of them. The people on the farm ran over, the officer pulled out his watch, looked at it, and announced 'we are going to burn this barn in exactly half an hour. Dismount!' The men got off their horses and were generally milling about, watering the horses, adjusting tack, talking among themselves. The officer dismounted and had a short, quiet conversation with the farm's residents who ran off to get what little stock they had away from the barn, then to get buckets and feed sacks to fight the fire. The officer walked in amongst his men and looked like he was giving directions to one of them, ambled back over to his horse and swung up into the saddle. He checked his watch and realized it hadn't been quite half an hour, sat quietly for a bit, looking around, checked his watch again, snapped it closed as he nodded to another man who bellowed 'mount up!' The officer caught the eye of the fellow who he'd been talking to, who now held a burning torch, and nodded. The soldier stepped past the water trough into the barnyard, reached up and caught the straw rick on fire, dropped his torch and went to his horse. As soon as he was in the saddle the command 'move out!' sounded, and they rode off, pretty fast. The people at the farm filled buckets of water to throw on the fire, grabbed the feed sacks soaking in the water trough and slapped at every small flame that was spreading along the sides of the rick or starting on the barn itself. They got the fire put out and saved the barn! Gathering together to catch their breath as they watched for any embers to flare up, they noticed that the horn had been broken off of the anvil."

Uncle Frank, who'd been telling me the story, ended it by saying "I reckon there must have been a couple of good-lookin' girls in that family!", while reaching inside the shed door, feeling along the bottom sill timber next to the



Cattle up against a straw rick.

weatherboarding, and, after a moment, lifted out the rusty iron cone, holding it up against the anvil between us for me to see where it fit.

Some few of you readers likely don't know what a straw rick is. The words are, I guess, what you would call a colloquialism for "straw rack." Whichever you say, it is a temporary structure of posts and beams just high enough for cattle to get under to provide shelter in the barnyard in winter along with bedding as the straw blows off or the cattle pull it down. The one in the above photo, likely the last at the farm, is out in the middle of the barnyard, straw blown onto the frame from a big pipe at the end of the threshing machine, belt driven by a steam tractor, but shows the height of the structure and some cows glad to be under it. The other photo shows sheaves of wheat being forked onto wagons to be fed into the thresher. My grandfather was probably one of the last farmers in the area to harvest with a McCormick binder, the successor to the reaper, a machine that used a sickle-bar cutter and reel to harvest the grain and a moving canvas floor with low wooden cleats to pull the stalks into a device that tied the sheaves with twine and then dumped them onto the ground. My best guess of the date of the rick photograph is 1954 or 1955 — I was furious that I could only watch the steam tractor from the yard of the house while my brother, three years older, was allowed to go out into the barn lot and watch from the side of the machines that didn't have the drive belt running between them.

Straw ricks were good places to start a barn fire in the fall of 1864 because they were pretty much up against the yard side of a bank barn and full after



A machine rick at the neighboring Evans Place.

the winter wheat harvest. Up close to the barn because the threshing floor with its threshold was at the far end of the wagon drives where wagon loads of sheaves, hand tied with a couple of stems after either being cradled, and laid in rows or harvested with a reaper and swept off its platform, were backed up the bridge and across the smooth end of the drives to be unloaded and threshed by hand, chaff blowing out of the opened doors and the three or four inch threshold retaining the heavier grain as it fell to the floor to be scooped up and bagged or moved into the granary bins under one end of each hay mow. The far edge of the rick couldn't be further away from the barn than the loose straw left after threshing could be thrown with a fork and the near edge was close enough to the barn that the straw, which fell short, got onto the stack. Once lit, the straw would burn hot and fast, flames curling under the slight overhang of the main structure that protected the doors to stables and feeding rooms from the weather and up along the doors to the threshing floor above, catching the barn afire.

The same factors that led to the rick being close to the barn, and the low height of the frame, just above a cow's back, no doubt helped the people at the farm fight the fire. Water from a bucket could be flung across the top of the straw from the threshing floor above and up the sides from the ground, and any flames starting to catch on the barn overhang, doors, or edge of the

threshing floor could be slapped down with wet sacks. The man or woman carrying buckets up had to hustle, going around the barn and up the barn bridge rather than in through the feeding rooms and up the steps — space for stairwells was boxed off from the mows on either side, but staircases had never been built in the barn at Lofton Farm, in northeastern Augusta County between Mt. Sidney and Weyers Cave.

When I, as a young lieutenant, and reported to Ft. Sill, Oklahoma, my first duty station, I recall my immediate surprise upon seeing that the main street of the post was named after Phillip Sheridan, known back home as a common arsonist. I've read and learned a number of things about him in the years since, which have changed my opinion of the general, and ask your indulgence in relying upon my memory, as I cannot provide citations to the sources of information:

Unlike many of his fellow West Point trained officers he did not leave the Army after the Mexican War, and at the time the Civil War started was stationed in the Pacific Northwest contending with Native Americans who schooled him well in scorched earth tactics. Any army camp left without an adequate protective force while the larger body was on patrol was reduced to ashes.

Like General Ulysses Grant, he had, before entering the Army, some passing employment in store keeping, which led Grant to bring him to the Midwest where the Army had serious difficulties with procurement and logistics. Sheridan resolved that scandal in short order and was rewarded with the Valley command.

Once in the Valley, his command was constantly troubled by nighttime partisan or bushwhacker attacks against individuals and small groups of his soldiers, culminating in the death of Lieutenant John Meigs, a West Point graduate, valued member of Sheridan's staff, and the son of General Montgomery Meigs, Quartermaster General of the U.S. Army. General Grant had ordered Sheridan to cripple the Valley's ability to provide food and fodder to the Confederate army and Meigs's death, an incident that could not be ignored, spurred Sheridan's implementation of the best means of satisfying Grant's order, beginning what historian John Heatwole aptly characterized in the title of his book as "The Burning" in October of 1864.

Because of his logistical experience, Sheridan took great care to have adequate stores for his troops in his supply trains, and required that they carry twice the number of portable forges required to insure that the horses of the supply wagons and the horses of their protective cavalry screen were properly shod. Unlike those of some commands, Sheridan's supply column kept up with his troops. Whenever they stopped, they had what they needed.



The Lofton Farm anvil.

The last listed bit of information that I mention explains the Lofton Farm anvil's condition. Some of the men "milling about" after their commander announced that the barn would be fired in half an hour were busying themselves hacksawing a groove around the base of the anvil's horn to provide the weakening of its metallic structure that allowed it to be struck off easily with a sledge. It could not have been by coincidence that the troops had the proper tools with them, and did the sweaty work of sawing and effectively demilitarizing the anvil, rendering it useless to the Confederate army or a partisan rider whose horse threw a shoe. General Sheridan understood the importance of what, beside the inferno of a burning barn, seemed to be a small bit of destruction.

The larger questions remain: "Why did the officer announce the half-hour timing and why did he ride off without waiting to verify that the barn had irretrievably caught fire?" Short of finding a self-examining unnamed soldier's diary there is no way to provide a definitive answer, but some contributing factors can be identified and some not unreasonable speculations entertained.

It was afternoon and reasonable to assume that the men and horses had been going steadily since first light and that the orders included the requirement that all barns in a general area be examined and that people's circumstances and attitudes be evaluated before making the final decision to

burn. The latter could be accomplished just as effectively without giving the half-hour's warning but the first assumption would mean that the soldiers had been riding all day and that the officer was taking care of his people by letting them stand down to the extent that circumstances allowed, giving them and the horses a bit of a break even as those tasked with the anvil went about their work. One might speculate that in the absence of a clear threat of resistance on arrival, it was decided that evaluation of the situation could be accomplished just as easily while dismounted and that speaking with the residents of the farm on foot was extending a small courtesy that could lessen the tension in any conversation.

Standing near the barn, the officer could not observe the missing staircases in the barn but could not help but notice that the family there was living in the completed detached kitchen block of what promised to be a substantial brick residence, the larger part of which had not been finished. Work having ceased at the beginning of the war when manpower and materials such as sawn planks for the barn stairs became unavailable. Unfinished construction left idle for several years had to have looked rough, possibly engendering some degree of sympathy for the folks facing the loss of their barn. One might speculate that the patrol thought that there was little threat of resistance because only three women responded to their presence, again, possibly engendering sympathy on the part of the officer who had to decide whether or not to burn the barn.

It was afternoon and the small detachment was some distance from their larger unit, headquartered near Dayton, some twelve miles away. Every soldier there was aware that there had been number of incidents and deaths before the Meigs killing, and that the work that they were about was likely to prompt more.

At a trot, they could cover the distance in an hour, but they and their horses had been out all day and were tired. There wouldn't be much trotting and they knew that they would be slow getting back to camp, despite the horses' desire for oats and their sense of the riders' apprehension of the coming dusk. None of them wanted their small group to be the next target of opportunity. One might speculate that some of the riders and their leaders were farming people themselves and had seen enough destruction in one day, and thinking of their womenfolk back home and didn't want to witness another inferno and the frantic efforts of the three women to put it out. There wasn't a big enough chance that they could to make the wait necessary.

My great-grandfather, Samuel Driver and his wife Mary bought the farm



Mary and Samuel Driver

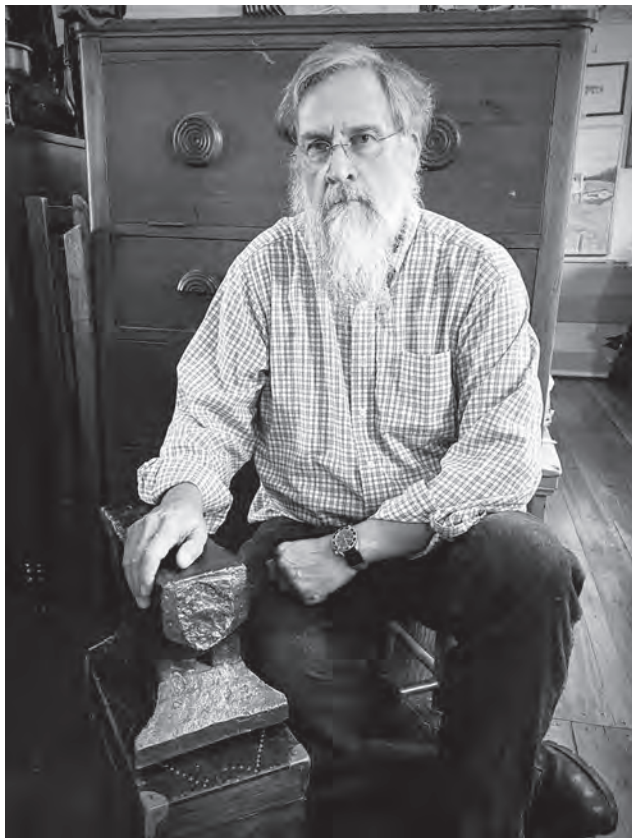


Thomas Burke

in 1877 from Thomas Burke. The kitchen block was complete but the main house was unfinished. In her last years my Aunt Bertha Gassett explained to me that in 1877 while he started farming the 130 acres and taught at Westview School, that her grandfather also dug clay, cut firewood, and made the brick to complete the main house, likely laid by the same mason, or the son of the mason whose work had been interrupted by the war. Samuel Driver's pocket notebooks, in which he kept track of his work and days of work exchanged with neighbors, contained numerous entries for "burning brick." To the day that it was torn down as the Harshbarger subdivision near Weyers Cave was built, the barn at Lofton Farm never had any stairs.

It was obvious from the quality of work and materials in the kitchen block, which had a well, deep cistern, a fully bricked ice-house and cellar that required a fifty-yard long trench for construction of their drains that Burke had spared no expense on the project. His financial situation was an important clue in understanding the pre-war census records.

Burke was not a common name in northern Augusta County then or now. I immediately thought that Thomas Burke May have been the owner or miller at Burke's Mill, later known as Burketown, about four miles north of the farm on the Valley pike. The only Thomas Burke listed in the Augusta County census of 1850 or 1860 was in the Northern Division of Augusta County, where Lofton Farm was located. Thomas Burke was enumerated as having \$30,000 of assets, vastly more than anyone in the surrounding pages,



The author with the farm anvil that survived the 1864 burning of the Valley during the Civil War.

but his occupation was listed as “farmer.” Trying to pin down the location of his place, I looked for the names of families that I knew lived near Lofton Farm, but could only find them pages away from Burke in the census books, clearly indicating that he did not live at the farm that he later sold to my great-grandparents. A bit discouraged that I couldn’t see a way to establish Burke’s farm as Lofton Farm, I set the whole bit of research aside. Some time later I took it up again, and, glancing at the page following the Thomas Burke listing, I noticed two households with the head of household’s occupation listed as “woolen factory.” Having read that a woolen mill that produced cloth for Confederate uniforms near Burke’s Mill was destroyed during the war, I was pretty confident that the proximity of homes of the weavers to Thomas Burke’s farm identified him as the mill owner and man with sufficient assets to have been building the house on what came to be known as Lofton Farm.

Based on the facts from the census, my speculation as to what happened

follows: At the start of the war, Thomas Burke would have suffered the same labor shortage at the mill and home farm as he did on his house-building site. The 1860 census shows that his oldest son and oldest daughter were no longer in his household. Enlistment records show that his second-oldest son joined the Confederate Army in 1861 as a lieutenant. Having the resources, he likely paid to exempt his remaining military-service aged son from conscription, hoping to be able to do the same for his thirteen-year-old son in the future, securing their safety and the labor he needed to keep things going. In 1864 it became obvious that there would at best be trouble with the Yankees at the mill, millers have enough disgruntled customers that someone would inevitably think it sly or try to ingratiate themselves with the Yankees by talking about his son in the army, and that trouble might spread to the nearby farm. He left the older of his sons to keep the best watch that he could on the home farm and mill, taking the rest of the family to live in the kitchen block of the new house, across a ridge and several miles away. His sixteen-year-old son came with his wife and two daughters to help his father with the heavier chores at the new place. On the day the Yankees came Burke and his son, having done the morning chores, would have left after breakfast to work at the mill and home farm, leaving behind his wife and daughters, Mary, aged twenty-two, and Elizabeth, twenty-one, planning to return in time for supper and the evening chores. The Yankees came before suppertime.

Uncle Frank was right about some good-looking women. Maybe that saved the barn, but not the anvil.

Painters & Printers

Waynesboro Artists

Charles Smith and George Speck

Exhibit by Nancy Sorrells and Kate Delaney

***Editor's Note:** The Augusta County Historical Society was preparing to open its latest exhibit in the History Gallery of the R.R. Smith Center for History and Art in March of 2020 when the COVID-19 pandemic shut down the Society and the Smith Center. The exhibit, originally scheduled to be up through the end of May, eventually opened as a combined exhibit with the Staunton Augusta Art Center on a limited basis by reservation only and with visitors required to wear masks and socially distance themselves, starting on June 26, 2020. The exhibit remained in place until the end of 2020. The text of the exhibit's interpretive panels, written by Nancy Sorrells and designed by Kate Delaney, is reflected in this article. In addition, some of the panel illustrations and art and artifacts from the exhibit are also included. The exhibit would not have been possible without the knowledge and expertise of Mary Macilwaine, Karen Loving, Elaine Moran, Morgan-Miles Picture Frames LLC, Steven Villereal and the University of Virginia Special Collections, and the Waynesboro Public Library.*

Introduction Panel

Art borne of Industry

Charles Smith (1893-1987) and his student George Speck (1928-2018) were perhaps the two most famous artists to call Waynesboro home. Although neither was actually born in the city, both grew up in the industrial boom town of early 20th-century Waynesboro. Each man dabbled in a variety of media, but both won lasting fame for their sophisticated and intricate block printing, a skill that has its roots in the factories and foundries along the South River. The lives of the two men traveled in intersecting circles with Smith becoming Speck's art teacher and mentor. Both were educated in the Waynesboro public schools, had ties to Fairfax Hall (the girls' school in Waynesboro), were connected to the University of Virginia, studied in Paris, and both were heavily influenced by the



Charles Smith in his studio located in his home in Charlottesville. (University of Virginia Special Collections)

industrial shops of Waynesboro and Basic City, where wood carving and metal engraving took place daily. Smith completed thousands of prints during his career; even inventing a technique he called block painting. He also authored several books, including one on linoleum block printing. Several more books featured his block prints. Widely acclaimed as a multimedia artist who used art as therapy, Speck is remembered as a prolific, versatile painter, carver of fine woodcuts, sculptor of ingenious papier-mâché figures, and accomplished print maker. He was most proud of the woodcuts that featured his travels from around the world.

Charles Smith Panel

Charles William Smith (1893-1987)

"The quilts made in squares and sewn together, were beautiful creations and when hung on a clothesline for airing made an impressive exhibition, and no doubt influenced my liking for abstract paintings..." — Charles Smith

Charles Smith was not born into a world of art and culture. He began life in the rural southeastern Augusta County community of Lofton, where he came to understand abstractions of light and color by



Some of Charles Smith's block carving tools that have been preserved in the University of Virginia's Special Collections.

observing his grandmother's quilts. More accidental art lessons came at the knee of his father, whose carved linoleum block patterns produced elaborate ornamentation that graced utilitarian woodstoves produced at Waynesboro's Loth stove factory. As a child in Waynesboro, he often found himself sketching the constant hustle and bustle of the train station where the north-south and east-west trains crossed. It was no wonder that one writer later described Smith's journey toward international art fame as groping "toward art with no guide except intuition, no motivation except biological urgency."

Luckily, the precocious child had guidance from people, such as elementary teachers who recognized Smith's talent and arranged for lessons with the high school art teachers. His supporters encouraged him to submit art to the state fair and applauded when he brought home two blue ribbons.

As a 19-year-old, he attended summer art school at the University of Virginia before heading off to study art at Yale. WWI, a war that at least provided an opportunity to study art in Paris, interrupted his formal training.

After the war, he returned to Waynesboro to marry Nora Gardner, the daughter of the city mayor. His art—block printing, photographing, painting, and pen and ink—took him first to Richmond as a freelance illustrator and teacher and then to Vermont's Bennington College as an art professor. From 1947 until his retirement in 1963, he taught at U.Va. When the school created its first-ever art department, he became the first chair.

Early in his career he turned to block printing, building upon the skills he learned from his father. He used that talent to capture history and the everyday lives of working class people, black and white, in the South. *Virginia in Old Block Prints* became a runaway best seller in 1929.

In his later years, he immortalized his beloved U.Va. in a series of evocative prints and produced a meticulously illustrated historic map of Virginia. He also invented a form of abstract art using movable blocks, printer ink, and a small press to create what he calls block painting.

Through it all, he never lost touch with his rural roots in Lofton and his industrial perspective from Waynesboro. His formation in a unique cauldron of small town industrial life and hard-scrapple living makes for a fascinating tale of a country boy who created out what one art critic called truly American art.

George Speck Panel

George Speck (1928-2018)

“Color and Light always held a particular fascination for me.”

— **George Speck**

The industrial boom town of Waynesboro served as the incubator for George Speck’s life of art. But in the city where his father was a downtown businessman, it was his mother who first provided their only child with modeling clay, crayons, and paints to keep him busy. Surrounded by a nurturing community and encouraging teachers, his creativity blossomed.

His family home, Ivanhoe, located uphill from the private girls’ school of Fairfax Hall, was the center of his life as a child. “I enjoyed school and had many fine teachers all through grammar school and high school. I attended Wenonah grammar school, which my father also attended,” remembered Speck of his schoolboy days. He particularly remembered the kindness of his physics and math teacher, Mrs. Ethel Davies, who lived on Walnut Avenue. The Waynesboro Public Library, on Walnut across from Mrs. Davies, also held nostalgic memories for Speck. Many of his youthful memories in Waynesboro, as well as Staunton and the surrounding countryside, were turned into pen-and-ink illustrations for the 1962 book *Look and Learn French* by Anna Balakian.

Art teachers at nearby Fairfax Hall helped polish skills that were further refined at the University of Virginia where he studied under, and was influenced by, well-known Virginia artist, Charles Smith, who also



Self-portrait painted by Speck while he studied in Paris in the early 1950s.

had Waynesboro roots. After graduating, Speck spent time in Richmond and New York City before studying and traveling extensively in Europe, experiences that, he explained, “stimulated and nurtured my growth as a creative individual.”

Eventually he found a home in NYC, where he taught and also produced and sold works in all types of media from photography,



The Parthenon by George Speck.

painting, and block printing, to pen and ink and papier-mâché. His work reflected an international flavor, energized by his world travels and youthful memories in Virginia. He went on to get master's and doctorate degrees, the latter in art therapy.

Despite his love of NYC, he never forgot Charlottesville, Waynesboro, and Virginia. Inspired by the healing power of art, he donated more than 200 pieces of his work to medical and educational facilities and helped raise money for many causes, including a "computers for kids" program in Charlottesville. He left a significant collection to the Waynesboro library as did his mentor, Charles Smith.

In 1995, he triumphantly returned to Waynesboro when the Shenandoah Valley Art Center hosted a 50-year perspective of his works in a one-man show. An art journalist at the time described him as "Tall, handsome and husky, with the flamboyant personality and rich, deep voice of a Shakespearean actor. Speck is a painter, printmaker, art educator, and writer and lecturer on art therapy, as well as an astrologer, graphologist and world traveler."

University of Virginia Panel Cavaliers through and through

The University of Virginia intertwines itself in the lives of both Charles Smith and George Speck. As a precocious teenager from Waynesboro, Smith attended U.Va.'s summer art session in 1911. "I regard him as one of the most talented students whose work has come under my observation. He is himself so far advanced that he is capable to give instruction on the subject in school, college, or other institution which has the department of drawing," wrote instructor John Blair.

Blair went on to say that if there were a vacancy at the Charlottesville school, he would offer it to Smith. His wish came true and a year later Smith returned as a summer session instructor. Thirty-four years later, after stints in various aspects of the professional art world, Smith returned to U.Va. permanently as a graphics art teacher in the architecture school. When the university formed an art department, Smith was named chair. Smith retired in 1963 as a beloved campus character.

Speck's connections to the University of Virginia go back to his birth in the university hospital on May 25, 1928. He returned to the grounds as an undergraduate, earning his B.A. in 1950. Although his degree was in English, he gravitated toward art from a young age and in Charlottesville, he studied under Smith, who became his life-long mentor.



George Speck block print of the Rotunda on the University of Virginia campus.

Charles Smith block print of the Rotunda on the University of Virginia campus.



The university made appearances in the art of both men. Speck produced colorful woodblock prints of the Rotunda and the famous brick serpentine walls found on campus.

Smith published a book, *The University of Virginia*, in 1938 that featured 21 woodcuts showcasing different aspects of the campus. The University of Virginia Press reprinted the book almost 20 years later. Of the U.Va. book, Smith said, “It was my desire to show things and places that we really see without looking for them; the early morning sunlight streaming across the Lawn, falling on rounded white columns, the brilliant midday sun striking vine covered buildings; evening shadows... boxwood gardens, serpentine walls....”

He added: “I chose things that [Edgar Allan] Poe saw, that Woodrow Wilson saw, that the oldest living graduate saw....”

Art Therapy Panel

The Art of Healing

There is no doubt that George Speck was a versatile artist, but what set him apart from other artists was his use of art for healing. After completing an undergraduate degree, Speck, who grew up in Waynesboro, studied abroad, expanding the scope and depth of his paintings and prints. Upon returning to America, he went back to school, earning a master's degree in English literature.

For a short period he taught literature and painted on the side. All that changed when he was hired to teach emotionally disturbed children. Initially frustrated at the children's inattention, he discovered that when he drew pictures in front of them he captured their attention.

"It was as though I hit the jackpot. The youngsters began to crowd around, anxious to learn to draw. Soon they began to confide in me. It made me realize that art was a means of making contact," he explained.

Once the lightbulb turned on, there was no switching it off. Speck took graduate classes with an art therapist and began writing a dissertation based on his personal experience helping a young boy overcome his problems through art. Speck's work combining art, education, psychology and ancient symbolism, earned him the first art therapy doctorate degree in the country. More importantly, it set him upon his life's journey of harnessing art's healing power. Through the years, he wrote extensively on the relationship between color and therapy.

In his later years, he bequeathed more than 200 works of art to be permanently displayed at medical and educational institutions on the East Coast, including the University of Virginia, the Bradley Free Clinic, and many private practices.

In Waynesboro, Speck honored the Waynesboro Public Library with a show and a donation of many of his pieces. The artist had fond memories of the library while growing up in the city.



George Speck



San Pietro #2 by George Speck

Many of his drawings and oil paintings depict scenes from his youth. Those paintings began with a brush for a simple outline and ended with a palette knife to fill and add texture. During his 1983 show at the Waynesboro library, he talked about the various uses of light in his art. "Light in Greece is pure and white; in Mexico it is more golden. The light of Virginia is softer than the light of Vermont," he said.

One art critic noted that Speck "has spent a lifetime celebrating life, light and color in his works."



George Speck's carving tools were on display in the Painters & Printers exhibit in 2020.



Because the Society owns many of the blocks that George Speck used in his block print making, the exhibit was able to show Speck's technique for printing the tiger image, top, by using four blocks, each one printing a different color. Together the four layers created the multi-colored print.

Block Printing Panel

Block Printing

"Because it is not easy..." — George Speck

Both Charles Smith and his student George Speck excelled at a variety of mediums, but both eventually gravitated to an art form derived from their industrial Waynesboro upbringing—block printing. Neither simply dabbled in block printing; rather each made this form of art, in which one must always think in reverse, his signature style. Each developed unique techniques wielding knives, gouges, and chisels with the same skill as surgeons with lancets and scalpels. A comment about Smith's block printing, applied equally to Speck. "He feels that he must create within the two dimensions of this surface a complete independent existence."

This Charles Smith print is located in the University of Virginia's Special Collections.



Charles Smith creating one of his unique block paintings. Image from the University of Virginia Special Collections.

Smith found his home in the linoleum and wood block printing world by developing a unique relief style of printmaking in which he cut away areas not to be printed to bring out the pattern in white lines on black background. It was, according to one art critic “quite the reverse of the traditional method of woodcutting.”

Using this dramatic contrast of black and white lines, Smith published and exhibited prints made with both wood and linoleum blocks. The difference between the two mediums, he explained, was that wood allowed for fine lines and detail, while linoleum created large areas of color and minimal lines.

Unbound by tradition, Smith eventually strayed from traditional block printing to a unique art form that he called “block painting.” Drawing upon his early work with printing presses as well as his block printing background, he inked various wooden shapes to form an abstract composition pressed onto paper. “I select a block and apply colored printing ink to its surface; and this in turn is pressed onto a sheet of Japanese paper. . . . This operation is repeated block by block until I have completed the composition,” he said. Each finished “painting” was unique.

Speck almost certainly gravitated toward block printing because of his mentor. Although he used linoleum on occasion, he preferred pine boards with wide grains and knots, often deliberately incorporating those features into the design. For more elaborate prints, he cut as many as five different blocks for various colors in the print. Each board was inked, rolled, and pressed by hand onto rice paper. “It is the key block, the last one, that brings everything together into focus,” explained Speck of his technique.

Both Smith and Speck found themselves in the block printing medium rooted in their Waynesboro upbringing. For Speck, it was the art form of which he was most proud, and something he pursued with a passion “because it is not easy and requires years of disciplined training.”



The Painters & Printers exhibit. The three prints in the foreground are part of Charles Smith's zoological block print set.

Postscript

The Small Quiet Reminder Slips Away and the Child's Story is Forgotten

By David McCaskey

My Grandfather was a farmer near Weyers Cave who, rather than trusting the gossip circulating in the community, came to the Augusta County Courthouse several times a year to read wills that had been admitted to probate and confirm the terms of land transfers. As a young child I accompanied him on at least one of those occasions.

My only memory of that visit is of being in the first-floor corridor, thirsty, among a number of people milling about, and too short to reach the top of the water cooler. I was pleased to find another water fountain next to it that I could reach without my Grandfather's help and took a long drink only to have my pleasant feeling of independence quashed by someone that I didn't know loudly telling me that I shouldn't use that fountain, that it was for Colored people. I didn't understand what they meant and thought it unfair that I was being scolded for using the fountain that I could reach.

It was, of course, the Jim Crow water fountain, unchilled and low enough that an adult would have to stoop down to use it. When I came home from the Army to start my law practice in 1979, the fountain was gone, leaving only a steel pipe cap on the drain line against the wall by the electric water cooler.

When we were young, Virginia's institutions were clearly racist. The improved application of the laws has brought profound changes during our lifetimes, but it will take generations for those changes to fully permeate our society. I believe that the coming generations would benefit from quiet reminders of the way things were, and became interested in marking the pipe stub on the wall with a framed copy of the first few paragraphs above affixed to the wall at the height of the former water fountain. If that were done before the courthouse renovations, one of the quiet reminders would be preserved.

There have been two complete changes of courthouse personnel since 1979 and all institutional knowledge of what that steel pipe cap represented was lost. A recent visit to the courthouse to photograph the cap led to

the discovery that a new electric water cooler has been installed five feet towards the front door and drains into a vertical plastic pipe in the floor. The iron piping serving the two fountains remembered from my childhood has been cut off flush with the wall, and an immense, no doubt historic, safe sits half an inch in front of the location of the old drains.

In recent decades we have witnessed revisionist history in Staunton and Augusta County in the removal of embarrassing names, replacing them with names that fail to remind us of history that should be remembered in its full context. The new names are meaningless as soon as the few old-timers who persist in using the original name pass on. Changes in staffing, plumbing updates, and the the need to relocate unwieldy furnishings to facilitate efficient use of office space serve the purpose just as well.

Whatever eventual court complex design is adopted, the existing courthouse will be preserved. It is unfortunate that nothing in the hallway remains to give the lie to those who like to think “things were never like that here in Augusta County.”



The Augusta County Courthouse during the Jim Crow era earlier in the twentieth century. McCaskey's childhood memory, outlined in the above sketch, serves as a reminder that just like everywhere else in the South before civil rights, "separate but unequal" was the norm. That is a history lesson that should never be forgotten.

Book Reviews

by Daniel A. Métraux

Editor's Note: *The following section consists of reviews of recent books on regional and Virginia history as well as several that pertain to American history. Unless otherwise noted, these reviews are by AHB Book Review Editor and Associate Editor Daniel A. Métraux, retired Professor of Asian Studies at Mary Baldwin University. Please send any reviews or questions about reviews to the AHB's Book Review Editor Daniel Métraux at dmetraux@marybaldwin.edu. The deadline for all reviews is November 1, 2021.*

Books of Regional Interest

Dale E. MacAllister, *Lucy Frances Simms: From Slavery to Revered Public Service*. Staunton, Va.: Lot's Wife Publishing, 2020. 297 pp. ISBN: 978-1-93436-8497.

Anthropologist Margaret Mead once noted: "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it's the only thing that ever has." Mead's statement is verified by the hard work of a small group of African American teachers in or near the city of Harrisonburg, Virginia, who, in the latter years of the nineteenth century and early years of the twentieth, educated thousands of young African Americans. Before the end of the Civil War there were strong legal prohibitions against teaching slaves to read and write. The end of slavery led to the slow evolution of educational programs and eventually schools to educate a fully illiterate class of now liberated African Americans. This small coterie of African American teachers succeeded in fostering broad literacy for this group by the early 1900s.

Although educating so many African Americans involved the efforts and skills of a number of dedicated teachers, one female educator, Lucy Frances Simms (c. 1856-1934) stands out as the key pioneering teacher and education leader in Harrisonburg and Rockingham County. Simms was a dedicated teacher who taught in the area's schools for fifty-six years. It is estimated that by the time of her sudden death in 1934, she had taught fully half of the Black children who had gone to school in her area during those fifty-six years.

Dale MacAllister, author of *Lucy Frances Simms: From Slavery to Revered Public Service*, describes Simms as a transformational figure in the

educational and African American history of Harrisonburg. "Her influence on generations of African Americans growing up in Harrisonburg from the late 1870s to the early 1930s was profound. (234)." She was more than just a great teacher. She served as a stern but loving role model for her students who demanded much from herself as well as from her students. She taught a deep respect for honesty and about the need for all citizens to serve their communities and to be true to their families. Simms was also a leading force in many teacher's associations that sought to improve education in the region.

One only has to read several quotations from contemporary sources to understand Lucy Frances Simms's many accomplishments as a teacher and community leader and the great respect for her among both communities, Black and White, in and around Harrisonburg. In October of 1933, a few months before her death, a writer for the *Daily News Record* concluded an article about Simms's career by noting:

Miss Lucy Simms, colored, for 56 years beloved teacher in the Effinger street school, is very ill at her home on East Johnson St. Until she was taken ill, she had lost only a half day from teaching during her long career. She has taught more than half the present colored population of Harrisonburg and in many instances she has instructed three generations in one family. She has many friends among the while people as well as the colored, who wish her a speedy recovery (174)

Her obituary in the same paper a few months later noted:

The record of the faithful colored teacher has few if any parallels in Virginia. All of the pupils who have entered the primary grade at the Effinger Street School since its establishment have passed under her mother-like care. [I]t is estimated that 1800 boys and girls were instructed by her (176).

A reporter for the *Daily News Record* covered her funeral:

Born a slave [in 1856 near Harrisonburg], the beloved teacher obtained her education at Hampton Institute. She was one of the first graduates of the institution. She then started teaching, conducting school at Zenda for two years before coming to Harrisonburg...

[The funeral] was the most largely attended colored funeral ever held in Harrisonburg. The colored population widely

attended the service, and there were many white persons as well. They were there to pay tribute to the woman who contributed more to the education of the colored population of Harrisonburg than any other person (178).

Lucy Frances Simms is still honored and well-remembered in Harrisonburg. One example is the modern Lucy F. Simms Continuing Education Center in the city.

Author Dale E. MacAllister, a lifelong resident of Rockingham County, is a forty-year member and past president of the Harrisonburg-Rockingham Historical Society. He currently serves as Society's resident historian. He has spent a long career teaching physical science in Rockingham County and supervising student teachers for JMU.

MacAllister's book on Lucy Frances Simms is at once a very detailed study of her career, but it is also a very rich history of the African American community in the Harrisonburg-Rockingham county area. We get a broad history of the sad lack of education among slaves in Virginia before the Civil War, the critical role that the Freedmen's Bureau played in fostering education for African Americans, the important role that Black colleges like Hampton Institute played in training graduates to become teachers, and the gradual growth of public education for both Whites and Blacks in Virginia after 1870. MacAllister also introduces us to other teachers and community leaders, both Black and White, who played important roles in fostering education in postwar Harrisonburg and Rockingham County.

MacAllister's book provides a rich study of Simms's life and her influential role in the educational history of the region. The book is very deeply researched and very clearly and well written. It is also a very informative introduction to an important history of African Americans in the Valley. I, for one, had never heard of Simms and knew very little about the African American community in this region, so I am very grateful. Another interesting aspect of this work is the fact that while slavery was brutal, there was some degree of cooperation between Whites and Blacks to foster education for all children in the area, although segregation was the norm through the 1960s. The fact that Simms had the respect of many whites is good to hear.

One must also congratulate the publisher, Lot's Wife Publishing, for putting together such a well-constructed, beautifully illustrated, and pleasurable to read volume.

Alfred L. Cobbs, *Locked Out: Finding Freedom and Education After Prince Edward County Closed its Schools*. Richmond Virginia: Little Star, 2020. ISBN: 978-1-7323915-9-8

Alfred L. Cobbs tells the story of his accomplished life in the face of great adversity. He was born the son of a hard working but impoverished tobacco farmer in 1943 in Prince Edward County in Virginia. His parents produced ten children who worked hard to help their father with the farm and who developed a close sense of family unity and tradition. There were many other African American families in their neighborhood that differed little from the Cobbs family in their work and family traditions, but what made the Cobbses stand out was the outstanding professional and scholarly accomplishments of all the children. They all graduated from high school and eight somehow managed to graduate from college. Alfred L. Cobbs graduated from high school, majored in German at Berea College in Kentucky, later earned a PhD in German Studies at the University of Cincinnati, and embarked on a teaching and scholarly career first at the University of Virginia and later at Wayne State University in Detroit.

What makes Cobbs's life story so interesting and unusual is that he was born into an impoverished family when "Jim Crow" attitudes still ruled life in rural Virginia. Blacks were second-class citizens doomed to lives of poverty and servitude. There seemed to be no path out of this miserable existence. Schools were segregated—better schools for Whites and far inferior schools for Blacks. To make matters worse, from 1959-1964, Prince Edward County closed its public schools rather than desegregate them as ordered by the Supreme Court in the 1954 *Brown v Board of Education* decision. Cobbs, a rising tenth grader at the time, was one of the casualties among the African American students of the "locked out" generation.

Alfred Cobbs's family was shocked by this development. They truly understood the value and importance of education in the lives of their children and refused to surrender. Unable to find any schools in their own county, they arranged for their children to live with other families in neighboring counties (or in other areas of the country such as New Jersey or Arlington, Va.). With the support of a sympathetic family who lived far from home, Alfred was able to finish high school with high honors and to find a new home in Berea College, which allowed students to work on campus in exchange for having their tuition waived.

Locked Out is a vivid portrait of the evil side of "Jim Crow" in Virginia. It was a cruel world that totally denigrated Blacks to a lowly existence. But the Cobbs family saw a path to a better life and the children exhibited tremendous

courage and determination to succeed by not only escaping “Jim Crow,” but also by moving ahead in a challenging world of careers. It demonstrates that hard work, a good education, and a desire to succeed created an escape valve for even the more destitute victims of segregation. Cobbs writes:

In reflecting back on my teaching, service and research career of nearly fifty years – forty-four as a professor and three as a graduate teaching assistant, I can say that my life in academia was a most satisfying and rewarding one. It afforded me wonderful life experiences that I never could have imagined when the lights were turned out on public education for Blacks in Prince Edward County, or when I was an insecure and struggling student at Berea College in the early ‘60s (159).

Locked Out is a very clearly written and inspiring book that is a very welcome addition to the growing number of recent books by and about African American history in Virginia.

Mary E. Lyons, *Slave Labor on Virginia's Blue Ridge Railroad*. Charleston, S.C.: The History Press, 2020. 159 pp. ISBN: 978-1-4671-4490-2

A commission of twenty-one Virginia state senators and several dignitaries including Thomas Jefferson and James Madison convened in 1818 at the Mountain Top Hotel at Rockfish Gap on what was known as Afton Mountain. The hotel, which marked the central part of the state, was not easy to reach. Crude windy roads connected the east side of the Blue Ridge to the West, but the mountains provided a very real barrier between eastern and western Virginia. Thirty years later another notable guest, Claudius Crozet, spent a week at the hotel planning his survey of a proposed railway link through the Blue Ridge Mountains that would connect eastern Virginia with the Shenandoah Valley and points west.

The great rush to construct railway lines began in earnest in the 1840s. Breaching the Blue Ridge Mountains was a matter of paramount importance for Virginia's trade and passenger travel. The project included the construction of several major tunnels through the mountains as well as several bridges. An important component of the project was funding to pay for this huge construction project and labor to do the actual work. That same year, 1849, Virginia's General Assembly finally approved state funding for the seventeen-mile route through the mountains. Eventually the labor problem was met by hiring a good number of Irish workers and the use of leased slave labor.

The subject of this worthy study is the use of leased slave labor in
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the construction of the railway between Charlottesville and the Shenandoah Valley. Leased slave labor was a common practice at this time. For example, it was at the heart of the academic village construction at the University of Virginia. Over a period of eight years, enslaved men leveled the land, lugged timber and nailed boards. An enslaved stone hauler, one blacksmith and fifteen brickmakers provided additional labor.

Historian and author Mary E. Lyons estimates that about fifteen hundred men and boys built the line. Most of them were Irish laborers, men who had come to the United States to escape the great famine back home. Records show that roughly three hundred enslaved men and boys worked on the Blue Ridge Railroad. Most of the slaves were held by major landowners. Their owners leased them to Crozet or to the railroad for a set fee generally for a period of one year. The leases included contracts whereby the owners agreed to supply labor in exchange for an agreed upon fee. The white workers were paid one dollar a day while the owners of the leased slaves from \$125 to \$150 a year for the services of the slave. Needless to say, the enslaved workers never saw any of their wages.

The Irish worked hard, but were not the most dependable of workers. They took off every available Catholic feast day, often stayed away with so-called illnesses and at least on one occasion went on strike for higher wages. The enslaved workers were often more dependable on assigned tasks. Crozet was especially annoyed with the strike of the Irish and hoped he could get more done with the enslaved workers.

The enslaved workers were assigned all sorts of tasks. They cleared the land by the tracks, worked in the tunnels, carried loads of rubble out of the tunnels, built culverts and made bricks that were then lugged to the tunnels. The ages of the slaves varied greatly from young boys to older men.

The completion of the Blue Ridge Railroad was a herculean task that essentially stretched from 1849 for the next decade, but when it was done it was surely one of the major engineering feats of the age. It is a testimony to Crozet and his workers, free and enslaved, that trains even today follow much of the same route today between Staunton and Charlottesville.

Mary E. Lyons devoted many years of painstaking research to piece together the story of the building of the Blue Ridge Railway and the enslaved workers who made it possible. It is a pity that we don't know the names of all but a few of the enslaved workers. We do meet one of the enslaved workers, a twelve-year-old boy named James Williams. We know his story because he lived a long life and talked and wrote about his experiences. At one point he recalled that enslaved people were "rented like a horse (47)."

Warner W. "Terry" Howard III, *Through the Years: The Storied History of Black Augusta Female and Male Athletes!* Privately Published in 2020. 165 pages.

Atlanta-based Warner "Terry" Howard III is an award-winning writer and essayist with a few major publications such as the *Chattanooga News Chronicle* and *The Atlanta Business Journal*. He was born and raised in Staunton, Virginia and attended Booker T. Washington (BTW) High School, the school designated for African American students in the years before integration came into force in 1966. Howard played on the BTW Golden Eagles Basketball team before a deep bone fracture ended his playing career during his senior year.

Howard wrote this book because there is no other publication that can document an important piece of African American culture in this sector of Virginia. He quotes an old African proverb: "Until the lion tells his side of the story, the tale of the hunt will always glorify the hunter." Because nobody had written any lasting document concerning African American athletes in the Valley "I accepted the self-imposed challenge to write about African American athletes who performed over the decades in my hometown and beyond. Although many of the stories were reported in local papers when those talented teams brought championships home, many never received the recognition they deserved. Hopefully, this publication will set the record straight (11)."

The coverage of the book is centered on BTW from the late 1920s to 1966. The final section looks at Black athletes who performed well in such integrated schools as Robert E. Lee High School in Staunton after 1966. Although BTW is the centerpiece of this publication, there are also stories of Rosenwald, Watson, Lucy Simms, Jefferson, Carver, Central Augusta, Downing and other Black high schools elsewhere.

Howard portrays a few different sports including baseball, football, wrestling, and golf, but the key sport was basketball. For many at BTW, basketball was the only athletic outlet available to the African American community. "Basketball was the glue that kept the generations, genders, 'classes,' and 'races' connected, focused and provided a sense of belonging and strong school spirit that infused the entire community (38)."

The time of greatest glory for BTW came when the school won two back-to-back state championships in 1960 and 1961 and at one point put together a forty-two-game winning streak. The coach of that team, Alphonso Hamilton, was later inducted into the Virginia High School Hall of Fame for his exploits as a coach and community leader. There is a long

section in the book about the life and contributions that Hamilton made to the community. Other coaches honored in this text include Louis Thurman at Rosenwald, Allen Jackson of Augusta County Training School, and Staunton native Ron Hill, a fixture as a coach at Atlanta's Mount Vernon School in George who passed away from COVID earlier in 2020.

One of the most interesting features of this book is the author's many interviews with former Black athletes and coaches. One of the best interviews is with wrestling coach Terry Waters. Waters was among the first African American head coaches in Augusta County's integrated schools. (*Editor's note: the very first African American coach in Augusta County's schools was Joan Brown who coached softball at Wilson Memorial High School during the 1966-1967 school year.*) The winningest wrestling coach in Virginia and six-time coach of the year, he accumulated a series of impressive winning seasons at Riverheads and Fort Defiance high schools. He later achieved success at Washington & Lee University. The long interview includes interesting commentary on the keys to success for coaching and the loneliness of being a Black head coach in a profession dominated by Whites.

Howard's book also brings back teams and team exploits that are otherwise mainly forgotten. During the 1940s there were a few semi-pro basketball teams that included the Staunton Falcons, the Atomic Bombers, and the Quiet Townsmen. These teams consisted mainly of local talents who had graduated from BTW and other schools. They achieved great success playing semi-pro teams from all over Virginia that included the Lynchburg Owls and Charlottesville Lucky Seven.

Howard's book covers the transition to integrated schools in the mid-1960s. While he agrees that integration is a good and just practice, he also comments on things that were lost. Segregation united the Black community and schools like BTW brought pride and cohesion to their world. He discusses the fact that BTW and other Black schools were the crown jewels of the African American community for so many years. "While the realities of segregation kept races apart for decades, integrating them into the athletic fields, courts and classrooms was not without its challenges (134)." There were racial tensions between White and Black students, but in the long run members of both races made a successful transition to integration.

Howard's book is very well-researched and written and is an important contribution to the growing library of books and articles about the African American community in Staunton, Waynesboro, and

Augusta County. The reader will learn a great deal about the vibrant life of this community and of BTW High School. Moments of great local pride include the two state basketball championships in 1960 and 1961. Because Howard puts so much effort into introducing the reader to many of the great athletes, male and female, many of whom have gone on to impressive careers, we get to know these figures as real people. So many people who might be lost to history find new lives in the pages of Howard's book. Howard has also accumulated dozens of photographs that bring vibrancy and life to an already lucid and lively text.

Bettye Kears, *The Other Madisons: The Lost History of a President's Black Family*. New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2020. 272 pages. ISBN:978-1-328-60439-2

Bettye Kears is a retired African American pediatrician turned historical detective who investigates her family's rich historical past hoping to solve a mystery that her late mother had told her about when she was a child: "Always remember – You're a Madison. You come from African Slaves and a president."

Historians at Monticello in Charlottesville have now accepted the fact that Thomas Jefferson had sexual relations with Sarah "Sally" Hemings, an enslaved woman of mixed race owned by Jefferson who was the father of at least some of her six children. That James Madison is included as a participant in these historical findings comes as a surprise to me and other historians because he had no children with his wife Dolley Madison. who had borne a son by her first husband. Some scholars have speculated that Madison was impotent or infertile. So what about these assertions that he had a son during a sexual encounter with a young slave woman in his employ?

There is a tradition dating back to parts of Africa of each family having a *griotte* – a family storyteller or oral historian. History is preserved from one generation to another through this *griotte*. Like the Dalai Lama, each of these storytellers is chosen by the last. Groomed as oral historians, they can act as a family's conscience and main memory tool. Bettye Kears's mother was the family *griotte* and before she died, she passed the mantle to her daughter.

The *griotte* tradition for the author's family was brought to what is now America with Kears's antecedent, an abducted maiden whom the white Madisons in Virginia purchased and called Mandy. Mandy had

a daughter during a tryst with James Madison's father. Their daughter, Coreen, worked in the Madison's kitchen as a house slave. According to Kears family tradition, some time during the 1790s James Madison found himself attracted to Coreen. Their relationship brought about the birth of their son Jim who grew up on the Madison plantation at Montpelier. Jim later fathered children, thus creating the Madison branch of African American descendants.

When Bettye Kears retired from her job in pediatrics, she devoted her time to historical research to learn as much as she could about her family history. She visited the Madison plantation on several occasions, talking with archaeologists, historians, and the descendants of slaves. Her research led to her discovery of long lost burial sites of her own ancestors. She traveled to Africa and Portugal to learn more about the slave trade.

So what about her ancestor Jim? Was he really the son of President Madison? While DNA taken from descendants of Jefferson can point to Jefferson's guilt, there is no large group of Madison's family alive today. The one living person with any relationship to the Madison family refused to perform a DNA test. Therefore, the only evidence is the oral history passed down by the author's family.

One issue that is central to this book is the sensitive relationship between white slave owners and their African slaves. The slaves were unwilling victims of the lust and rape of their masters. There are many ugly sides to slavery, but the actual forced rape of young slave women was one of the worst. The white master had full control over his slaves and attractive young slave women were apparently fair game for people like Jefferson and Madison. It is ironic that the slave master wrote his draft of the Constitution promising freedom for all.

Bettye Kears's book *The Other Madisons* is a very penetrating study of one of the darkest corners of both Virginian and American history. But it is also an encouraging look at a family that started in slavery, but which over the years has risen to the ranks of the professionally gifted. This work is comparable to Alex Haley's seminal book *Roots*. Kears is a gifted writer and sound historian who provides a clear view of her family history.

Scott Hamilton Suter, *A Potter's Progress: Emanuel Suter and the Business of Craft*. Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 2019. ISBN: 978-1-62190-525-7. 149 pp.

The latter years of the nineteenth century and the early years of the twentieth century marked the era of America's first industrial revolution. During this period the United States began to transform itself from a rural agricultural based economy into an increasingly urban and industrially oriented state. The Shenandoah Valley to this day remains one of the key agricultural areas in Virginia, but it has a growing share of industrial and technological activity and is well connected with the very modern technologically based economies of more urban America.

Scott Hamilton Suter, professor of English and American Studies at Bridgewater College, has composed a careful case study of the nineteenth century transition of the Shenandoah Valley from a region based traditional local agricultural culture into a more highly developed industrial and technological area with close ties to the advanced economies of Philadelphia and New York. Suter bases his case study on the career of his great-great grandfather Emanuel Suter (1833-1902), a potter and farmer who though born into a traditional Mennonite culture near Harrisonburg, expanded his horizons by cultivating the art of pottery into a thriving modern industrial concern. We see in great detail how Emanuel Suter, who began his career as a traditional farmer with a sideline interest in making pottery, became a highly developed advanced entrepreneur operating a modern industrial company.

Suter based his career as a farmer and potter and in his religious activities on the concept of "progress." His mindset was based on always questioning the way things were done in the past while looking for ways to improve things with new ideas and new methodology. He sought to modernize the Mennonite faith by changing the way ministers were chosen and he argued for the creation of Sunday school classes for young members. Suter also sought new ways to improve the quality and productivity of his pottery workshops. Suter got many of his ideas for modernizing his pottery work when he briefly moved to Pennsylvania near the end of the Civil War. While there he observed several pottery workshops more advanced than those back in Virginia. It was his constant search for innovations that made him the most prolific nineteenth century traditional potter in Rockingham County, Virginia. "Suter's career spanned from 1851 to 1897, a period in which he operated three pottery workshops, each moving forward technologically and culminating with a modern industrial manufactory (2)."

After his return to Rockingham County right after the Civil War, Suter

began to build his pottery business along the lines of the Pennsylvania potters he had embraced. He greatly expanded his business and his means of production changed, permitting him to shift from the traditionally seasonal craft in which he apprenticed to a major year-round business that supplied many Valley merchants and residents with a great variety of inexpensive but high-quality products. "Suters' decision to incorporate his business forms the last link in his chain of making 'progressive' decisions regarding his work. Already beyond the aptitude of local pottery knowledge and techniques, Suter sought to step further out of his community traditions and into the corporate world that was burgeoning in the United States in the 1880s and 1890s (77)."

The quality of this work is greatly enhanced with the author's use of Suter's own words from his diaries and notebooks together with numerous samples of his pottery endeavors. The end of the book is beautifully illustrated with two dozen color photographs of his pottery. One can see that, while Suter became involved in the mass production of his ceramics, he remained a skillful artist fully capable of original handsome products.

The true value of this work is the author's very detailed study of the growth, modernization and industrialization of Suter's pottery business. He sold his products not only in the Valley, but also in Charlottesville and perhaps throughout Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, and elsewhere in the East. The once bucolic and isolated Valley had joined the industrial revolution. The author also presents a convincing argument that the culture of the Valley is and was very different from the "Old South" that included much of eastern Virginia. Valley culture is more closely tied to Pennsylvania and much of the North rather than with the "Old South."

Scott Hamilton Suter's *A Potter's Progress* is a thoroughly researched and well written monograph that should be of major interest to students and scholars of Virginia and Valley history. This work demonstrates the many changes that occurred in the Valley in the years after the Civil War. There are times when the author loses us in the technical analysis of Suter's modernization projects and the writing is often very dry, but the high quality of research and originality of this study make it a major contribution to regional history.

Sarah Kay Bierle, *Call Out the Cadets: The Battle of New Market, May 15, 1864*. El Dorado Hills, Calif.: Emerging Civil War Series: Savas Beatie, 2019. 171 pp. ISBN: 978-1-61121-469-7. Foreword by Col. Keith E. Gibson.

David A. Powell, *Union Command Failure in the Shenandoah: Major Franz Sigel and the War in the Valley of Virginia, May 1864*. Eldorado Hills: Calif.: Savas Beatie, 2019. 233 pp.

The May 15, 1864, Battle of New Market was one of the most iconic battles of the American Civil War. It marked the last Confederate victory in the Valley of Virginia during the Civil War and involved a daring charge by young cadets brought into the fray from their desks at the Virginia Military Institute (VMI). Two very worthy books, Sarah Kay Bierle's *Call Out the Cadets* and David A. Powell's *Union Command Failure in the Shenandoah*, both published in 2019 by the same publisher, discuss very different aspects of this small but fateful battle. Bierle focuses on the battle itself and on the role of the cadets while Powell analyzes developments on the Union side while barely mentioning the VMI cadets.

The Valley was one of the key battlegrounds of the Civil War. It provided much of the food for Lee's army as well as salt and saltpeter. A key target was the city of Staunton, which was a major railway hub – the Virginia Central Railroad (later the C&O) ferried vital supplies and troops to Lee's army further east and was the main link between the Confederate Army of Northern Virginia and other rebel forces in places like Tennessee. Both sides realized that holding the Valley was a critical key to victory in the war. Stonewall Jackson's famed Valley campaign of 1862 stymied every attempt by Union forces to even enter the region, but that never stopped the federal forces from devising new plans to capture the region.

Union General Ulysses S. Grant orchestrated a spring 1864 campaign in the Valley as integral to his greater strategy that was designed to turn Lee's strategic western flank, to deny Lee's army of much needed supplies, and to prevent other Confederate forces from reinforcing Lee. Although he had misgivings about his decision to appoint German-born general Franz Sigel to direct the Union's strategy in the Valley, Grant nevertheless approved Sigel to lead an offensive up the Valley from Winchester.

Grant envisioned a pincer movement that would squeeze and eventually crush the Confederacy in the Valley. Union General George Crook would enter the Valley in southwestern Virginia from Tennessee and would move down the Valley toward Augusta County seizing key Confederate towns and rail links before marching into Staunton. There Crook planned to meet

Sigel's army, which was marching south from Winchester. Part of the plan met failure when Confederate resistance first slowed Crook's army and later diverted him in a different direction—sadly for the Union, he never made it to Staunton.

Sigel's army of more than ten thousand troops began to march south up the Valley in early May. His main opponent was Confederate general John C. Breckinridge (former Vice President under Buchanan and Lincoln's strongest opponent in the 1860 election) and his force of just over 5,000 men. This 2-1 margin in manpower seemed to give Sigel a strong advantage, but there were problems that greatly hampered Sigel's ability to operate efficiently. One key factor was a massive convoy of wagons carrying food and equipment not only for his army, but also for Crook. Sigel had to divert several thousand troops to protect the supply line from endless surprise attacks by Confederate cavalry led by John Imboden of Staunton. Sigel also divided his army into two parts going around Massanutten Mountain. The result was when Sigel approached New Market, he met a Confederate force equal in size to the Union army.

Breckinridge executed a brilliant battle plan while Sigel was slow, disorganized, and indecisive. Breckinridge also ordered 280 VMI cadets to march north from Lexington through Staunton to bolster Confederate forces. The advantage of the May 15, 1864, battle at New Market went back and forth, but near the end of the day a Confederate charge that included the VMI cadets broke the Union line and sent their troops in a hasty and disorganized retreat. Sara Bierle devotes some attention to the VMI cadets as they marched through Staunton. When passing the Augusta Female Seminary (now Mary Baldwin College) the young cadets were cheered lustily by a large contingent of young women.

Historian David Powell blames a number of Union officers including General Sigel for the failure of his campaign. One factor was the failure of General Crook to march on Staunton—Sigel had no idea of Crook's decision to not march north of Lexington. If Crook had followed the plan, his army marching toward Augusta County would have forced Breckinridge to confront two Federal armies instead of just one. But, Powell notes, Sigel is not without blame. "Perhaps his biggest blunder can be found in the constant meddling with the chain of command, attaching and detaching brigades, regiments and even companies willy-nilly, without regard to unit cohesion (Powell, 206)."

Author Sarah Bierle feels that while the battle at New Market

may have been quite small and off the beaten track, it had significant repercussions for the war itself:

First, the battle denied the Union control of the Shenandoah Valley and an approach to the Army of Northern Virginia's flank or Richmond. Second, the New Market Campaign unraveled Grant's ambitious military plans for the spring of 1864, forcing him to revise his objectives and look for a new commander to bring the rebels in the Valley into submission. Third, the battle of New Market marked the last decisive Confederate victory in a large scale battle in the Shenandoah Valley (Bierle, 146).

Although these two books cover much of the same material, they are very different. Powell's *Union Commander Failure in the Shenandoah* devotes a lot of attention to the conditions that led up to the battle. We learn why the Valley was so important as a target for both Union and Confederate forces and how General Grant conceived of a plan to get Generals Crook and Sigel to attack the Valley from both ends. Powell goes into great detail as to how and why Sigel was chosen and how Sigel surrounded his command with other Germans—a mystifying experience for other American officers. There is also a very detailed chapter on the failure of Crook's mission to meet Sigel in Staunton.

Sarah Kay Bierle provides very little detail of the events leading up to the battle. There is, however, a very long, sometimes hour-by-hour depiction of the actual battle. She devotes a lot of attention to the VMI cadets on their march north and their valiant charge that helped to change the course of the battle. There is also an automobile travel guide that takes one to many of the critical places where the battle occurred. Her book, like that of David Powell, is richly endowed with period photographs.

Powell's book is more fitting for the serious historian. It is well-researched and provides more than enough background material. Sarah Kay Bierle's shorter book is designed for the casual Civil War buff who likes to explore battlefields at his own leisure. I commend both books and suggest that reading both these books gives one a very good picture of the Battle of New Market.

Joseph D'Arezzo, *Images of America: Virginia in the Civil War*. Charleston. S.C.: Arcadia Books, 2016. ISBN: 978-1-4617-1575-9. 127 pp.

The Arcadia Publishing Company is one of the leading publishers of local history in the United States. Arcadia books have some text material that ties the book together, but far greater attention is devoted to period photographs or pictures from the region or event under discussion in any given book. Not long ago we reviewed Arcadia books on Staunton and Augusta County. The subject in this book is Virginia in the Civil War.

No other event in American history so threatened the unity of this country. The creation of the Confederate States of America led to the bitterest war in our history killing a million Americans and injuring many more. Virginia provided the setting for countless bloody clashes and decisive battles. Vast armies crisscrossed the state seeking strategic advantage as Union forces endeavored to capture Richmond, the Confederate capital while General Robert E. Lee led the Army of Northern Virginia in its defense. No other state or region endured as much savage fighting or physical destruction. The war began and ended in Virginia and was the site of such infamous battles as Bull Run, Fredericksburg, and Chancellorsville.

Author Joseph D'Arezzo, who earned a master's degree in American history from James Madison University and is vice president on the board of directors for the Cedar Creek Battlefield Foundation, has put together a fascinating collection of photographs that depict many aspects of the war in Virginia. General Sherman's statement that "War is Hell" is certainly an accurate assessment of what D'Arezzo presents his reader in this volume. We see many examples of fields strewn with the dead and dying. There are the ghostly ruins of Richmond, which resembles the state of Berlin in 1945. Perhaps most telling is a photograph of a road near the site of Chancellorsville several months after the 1863 battle there. Strewn across the road are the skulls and skeletons of dead soldiers, left to rot in the hot summer sun with nobody there to give them a decent burial.

Virginia in the Civil War is one of the best photographic volumes on the war. The reader will get a startlingly sad view of the reality of war and the physical suffering and destruction to the proud state of Virginia.

General American History

Jon Meacham, *Thomas Jefferson: The Art of Power*. New York: Random House, 2014 edition. 759 pages.

Thomas Jefferson dominated the young American republic for the first fifty years of its existence. As a citizen he became a key leader in his country's rebellion against the world's most powerful and richest empire. As a diplomat he oddly became a mentor of the French Revolution. As a philosopher politician he courageously engineered the separation of religion and state. As president, he doubled the size of the United States without firing a shot and, just as importantly, expanded the power of the presidency and the central government while at the same times preaching the virtues of limited government and individual liberty.

Pulitzer Prize-winning author Jon Meacham provides us with a superb analysis of how Jefferson combined his philosophical ideas on liberty and freedom with a penchant for strong government to achieve his aims. If Jefferson had been an impractical philosopher king with his head lost in the clouds of political theory, he would not have become the talented leader who guided the young republic through its difficult first half century. Meacham again and again demonstrates how Jefferson could ruthlessly exercise power to achieve some of his most noble aims.

When Jefferson became governor of Virginia in June of 1779 at the age of thirty-six, he faced a major crisis. The British launched a full-scale invasion of Virginia in early 1781 leaving Jefferson exposed as the person in charge of the defense of his state. He quickly found that the position of governor had only very limited powers to organize a militia response to the British. The key lesson he learned was that any state or republic above all needed a strong government that could take decisive action to protect the state. Jefferson was himself criticized for his inability to offer a sound defense against the British, but the truth is that the position of governor was itself too weakly construed to do any leader any good.

Meacham demonstrates how Jefferson wielded power to protect the United States in times of crisis. The first instance was in 1804 when he was handed the opportunity to double the size of the United States when Napoleon offered up the Louisiana Purchase. It was a now or never situation—Napoleon was famous as a person who often changed his mind and Jefferson acted quickly and arbitrarily to seal the deal. A few years later the British navy was firing on American ships and impressing its sailors. Hotheads demanded war against Britain, but the country was hopelessly weak militarily. Jefferson launched a full-scale trade embargo against both

Britain and France. This seizure of power over the American economy added greatly to the power of the executive, but it prevented or at least postponed a war that might have threatened the existence of the U.S.

Meacham's book is a showcase of Jefferson as an astute politician and leader. His failures as governor of Virginia haunted him for the rest of his life, but it taught him about the need for strong decisive leadership. His philosophical training urged him to help create a republic that fully respected the freedom and rights of every individual and he was terrified that people like Alexander Hamilton were going to build a strong, even monarchist style of government. But, like Hamilton, Jefferson was never afraid to use and expand the power of government to achieve his ends. Meacham portrays Jefferson as a skilled practicing politician unafraid to wield "the art of power" even when it placed him at odds with his small government ideology.

Meacham has the unique ability to go deep inside the mind of Jefferson to gather insights that the stranger would miss. Jefferson was a man of great talents but definite flaws and contradictions. Reading this book will give the reader an unusually clear picture of one of our greatest leaders and the chaotic times that marked the beginning of this republic.

Alan Taylor, *American Revolutions: A Continental History, 1750-1804*. New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 2016. 679 pp. ISBN: 978-0393082814

Alan Taylor is the Thomas Jefferson Professor of History at the University of Virginia. He is the author of many acclaimed books on early American history and has twice been awarded the Pulitzer Prize in History. His two books reviewed here provide a dramatic view of the formative and troubled years of the founding of the American Republic. These works differ from most standard histories of this period which often portray the American Revolution, the writing of the constitution, and the growth of the new nation as an orderly process. Taylor's two books portray a chaotic and violent period where partisans on two or more sides fought each other for supremacy and economic gain. Taylor often uses the term "civil war" to explain the savage nature of conflicts where brother fought brother and neighbors killed each other with wanton ferocity.

Taylor starts his history with a broad analysis of the struggle among European empires, notably Britain, France, and Spain, for dominance in North America. By far the wealthiest, most populated and stable region was the British enclave along the east coast, but between 1754 and 1763, at the conclusion of the Seven Years War, the British and their colonists had conquered French Canada and claimed the West as far as the Mississippi. The already wealthy

colonists believed that they would get to “share the imperial fruits of victory” as they also cheered the British monarchy for their triumph.

To the surprise of British America, the British unilaterally decided to exert greater control over the colonists, first and foremost restricting speculation and settlement west of the Appalachians by proclamation. They then attempted to extract much needed revenue from them to help pay for the very costly war that plunged the British government into a severe economic crisis. Some colonists, hoping for an even greater relationship with the mother country, became enraged when they were apparently treated as “distant and wayward inferiors.” They were insulted that they were not treated as freeborn Englishmen.

The biggest problem was the barrier placed upon westward settlement by the colonists. The population of coastal America was growing rapidly and there was a need for fresh areas of farm land. The British desired to keep Indian tribes at bay by guaranteeing their sovereignty over land to the West, but the border line stretched for hundreds of miles and it was hard to staunch the flow of settlers, which in turn led to further unrest among Native Americans dismayed by the apparent inability of the British to keep their promises. Making the tensions even worse was the inevitable lack of British civil government in these western lands— a situation for which there nothing the British could do to prevent. The increased taxation imposed by the British also infuriated wealthier colonists in coastal areas such as Boston and Virginia, thus further exasperating tensions emanating from the West.

The British reaction to protests from the colonies was harsh and at times brutal. The forced closing of the port of Boston aggravated anti-British feelings in Massachusetts. British promises of freedom made to slaves who fled their masters raised fears of an armed slave revolt. Brutality against civilian populations by British troops alienated many civilians who initially were only reluctant supporters of the Revolution.

Taylor’s coverage of the violence perpetuated by all sides and the economic repercussions of this wanton violence adds greatly to his historical narrative. When the war began, patriot crowds harassed Loyalists and nonpartisans with threats of violence into compliance with their cause. The war also saw brutal guerilla violence from New York to the Carolinas. The lack of civil authority, especially in the South, led to a major breakdown of law and order and brutal attacks on many very innocent civilians. The war itself was an economic travesty for all sides in all areas.

Taylor devotes a lot of attention on how all the major powers regarded

the conflict and how they might gain advantages by entering the war on one side or the other. His carefully crafted explanation of how and why France, Spain, and Holland joined in the fight against Britain is well considered as well as the role played by various Native American powers.

The last few chapters covering the period after the end of the war through Jefferson's first term in 1804 are also of major interest. President Washington warned against the creation of political parties and the dangers of partisan politics, but there soon emerged a great divide that engulfed political factions. There were deep and very open schisms over a variety of issues including the existence of a powerful central government. Supporters like Hamilton saw the need for a strong government as key to holding the new country together while opponents saw the danger of the tyrannical nature of a powerful central government. They claimed to have fought a desperate fight to remove an authoritarian government that had the power to over tax the citizenry.

Taylor presents a fascinating study of the debate between those forces supporting ratification of the 1787 constitution and those who vehemently opposed it because of their fears of a strong government. Taylor also does a good job discussing how the global conflict ignited by the French Revolution led to sharp partisan political debates between people like Hamilton and Jefferson.

A key theme is how the American Revolution affected neighboring areas in North America and elsewhere. Taylor goes to great lengths to show how the movement of thousands of loyalists to Canada led to the evolution of modern Canada. Buoyed by promises of free or cheap land and low taxes, formerly vacant land in what is now the province of Ontario grew rapidly. There is also a superb discussion of the Haitian revolution—the first and only time that slaves successfully rose up and overthrew their masters. The fear of a similar slave revolt in the United States led Jefferson and other American political leaders to virtually shun the new government of Haiti.

Taylor's *American Revolutions* is admirably researched and very clearly written. It takes many hundreds of pages to cover all of the topics covered here, but the result is a very broad analysis and portrait of the conflict that led to the creation of this country. What is surprising is the realization that many of the political and social issues that preoccupied Americans in 1800—the size and role of government, levels and kinds of taxation, racism, the role of women, the importance of education—still dominate political discussions today. Reading this book in its entirety

involves a great deal of commitment and time, but the reward will be a much better understanding of the Revolution and the realization that the Revolutionary process continues to this day.

Alan Taylor, *The Civil War of 1812: American Citizens, British Subjects, Irish Rebels & Indian Allies*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2015. 620 pp. ISBN: 978-1400042658

The War of 1812 is America's most forgotten war, but it yielded several very important results that served as the foundation for the future growth of both the United States and Canada as modern nations. University of Virginia history professor bases his recent book, *The Civil War of 1812*, on the notion that the conflict was not a war between two nations, but rather a violent civil war in which "brother fought brother in a borderland of mixed peoples."

Taylor concentrates on the U.S.–Canada border from Detroit to Niagara and Montreal. He contends that the border area housed people with similar backgrounds where the distinctions between British and American citizens were not very distinct. The majority of the people in the newly created province of Upper Canada (now Ontario) were loyalists from the United States who moved to Canada during and after the Revolution. The British were successful in attracting settlers with their promises of two hundred acres of land and very low taxes. Thus, when the war started these new Canadians found themselves facing their old countrymen.

Taylor identifies four factors that help to define the conflict as a civil war. The American army approached Canada with an air of confidence, but poor training, long often insecure supply lines, Indian attacks, and the tenacity of the British army backed by many settlers kept the Americans at bay. Another factor was that the war caused a great divide among Americans back home. Many American Federalists opposed the war and some even sympathized with Britain, a few going as far as spying, smuggling, and even talking about secession. There was also the fact that many Irish were migrating to the U.S. at this time and some of them joined the American army only to find themselves confronting other of their compatriots who had joined the British army. Finally, both sides used Indian allies to bolster their forces.

Taylor goes into great detail about the very bitter fighting that occurred along the border. Neither side could claim a clear victory, but the war had some lasting results. The United States and the British

in Canada never went to war again. The British finally recognized the United States as an independent nation and were able to establish a clear and lasting border with the upstart Americans. American forces near the end of the war were able to gain some significant military victories over various Indian tribes, thereby crushing their ability to hold on to their territory in what is now the upper Midwest. The paths to the settlement of the old Northwest Territory were now open to white Americans. The rush to the West was on.

Taylor gives an excellent analysis of the importance of the War of 1812 and anybody interested in this time period would do well to read this copiously researched and clearly written volume. There are any number of informative books on the War of 1812, but few if any of them provide the in-depth analysis. What makes the reading so interesting is that Taylor knows and understands his characters as real people—how they thought, why they acted in such a way—which in turn brings his history to life. A careful reading brings a sensitive view of pioneer life in places like Ontario, Niagara and Detroit.

This work is best read in conjunction with Taylor's *American Revolutions*

Recent Acquisitions of the Augusta County Historical Society December 2019-June 30, 2020

A Report from Donna Huffer, ACHS Archivist

This report consists of a list of recently accessioned, processed, and catalogued collections added to the ACHS holdings between December 1, 2019, and June 30, 2020. The members of the Archives Committee have worked hard to prepare and house these collections. I would like to thank my volunteers for all their dedication, despite the limitations imposed by COVID-19. At this time our committee is composed of John Sherwood, Suzanne Fisher, Heather Harman, and Joanne Soleiman. We have logged over 234 hours and helped sixteen researchers in the office from Washington, Arizona, Indiana, Georgia, and Washington, D.C. I personally have answered forty-one letters and emails regarding our collection and Augusta County History in general. Accessioning had to come to halt for several months while the Past Perfect 5th Cloud was installed. The work continues as I reconcile our accession list with our new data base. Recently, volunteer Heather Harmon placed photocopied pages of local church records (1850s-1900), probably associated with #778 collection, in a notebook with a table of contents and index. It is now on the shelf in the library and includes Sunday school membership, some marriages and death records, and a list of "colored people" attending services. Heather also put together a notebook containing baptismal records from local (German origin) churches dating back to 1795. The churches included are Emmanuel of Mt. Solon, Jennings Gap, Trinity, and Peaked Mountain. These loose sheets were formerly in the #778 collection from Peggy Shomo Joyner. They were also put on the shelf in the library for use.

2019.0029 The Faye Quick Papers. This collection consists of four hand-written pages of a speech delivered by Faye Quick to the class of 1907 at the Beverley Manor Academy. In her speech, she recounts the founding of the school and urges graduates to excel in their future endeavors. Also included in this collection is the Quick family genealogy and some newspaper clippings. These are found in the genealogy file cabinet under "Quick." Accessioned December 3, 2019, donor unknown.

2019.0030 Nancy Sorrells Collection, Addition. This collection contains the DVD The Man Who Told the Truth. The 60-minute DVD tells the life story of Ulster Scotsman Charles Thomson who came to Pennsylvania as a child and went on to become the Secretary of the Continental Congress. Thomson was an outspoken advocate for the rights of colonists and Native Americans at the outbreak of the American Revolution. Three of Thomson's brothers wound up in Augusta County and Charles Thomson owned land in Augusta County but never lived in the county and is never known to have visited the county. Parts were filmed near Greenville at the Pilson family cemetery where Mathew Thomson, Charles Thomson's broth-

er, is buried and Fort Defiance at Augusta Stone Presbyterian Church in Augusta County. Sorrells has a role in the film. The film is narrated by Bruce Clark who currently lives in the Thomson homeplace (Gortead) in the Upperlands, County Londonderry, Northern Ireland. The DVD was made by Media Production Ltd of Belfast. Accessioned December 3, 2019. Donated by Nancy Sorrells.

2019.0031 Mahlon Webb Genealogy Collection. Bird Richards, aunt of Mahlon Webb, created fifteen pages of genealogy in 1925 detailing her New England lineages. These pages contain information on the earliest families who settled at Plymouth, Massachusetts, and Hartford, Connecticut, including Hooker, Mullens, Alden, Richards, Goodman, and White. Accessioned December 3, 2019. Donated by Mahlon Webb.

2019.0032 The Jan Christophersen Collection. This vast collection of thirty-five folders centers around the Louis Pauly family of Deerfield, Virginia. Descended from French Huguenots, the Paulys left France for Manakintown, Albemarle County. From there, Louis Pauly bought land in Augusta County. In the thirty-five folders are photocopies of houses, Augusta County currency, postcards, local ads, newspaper clippings, train tickets, business cards, and letters. Son Albert died at the Stribling Spring Hospital in 1862 and his last letter is included. Christophersen also donated genealogies of the Pauly, Allegre, and Wolfe families. Most interesting is a copy of the will of Dangerfield Hunter, a slave of Louis Pauly. He is the only slave known to have filed a will in the Augusta County Courthouse. Accessioned March 13, 2020. Donated by Jan Christophersen.

2019.0033 Nancy Sorrells Collection, Addition. The accessioning is ongoing at this time.

2019.0034 Ben Thorsen Collection. This group of letters was bought by Thorsen at an auction house in North Carolina. He is an avid stamp collector and wished to remove the stamps which would have destroyed the collection. On reflection, however, he changed his mind and sent the letters to the society. The letters belong to Absalom Koiner (1824-1921) of Fishersville/Waynesboro and his extended family. Absalom Koiner was a colonel in the Civil War and served as state delegate for twenty-six years. These letters give insight into the family, local politics, and life on a progressive Augusta County farm. The accessioning is on-going at this time. Donated by Ben Thorsen.

2019.0035 The Peyton Cochran Collection. This letter was found tucked inside a book. It is dated September 6, 1943, and was sent by Lt. Everette F. Elred of Schenectady, New York, to Peyton Cochran. General correspondence. Accessioned December 3, 2019. Owner was Peyton Cochran.

2019.0036 The William Simmons Collection. Simmons was doing research on the Parnassus Elementary School located in northern Augusta County in the village of Parnassus. The collection contains a history of the first one-room schoolhouse built in 1890, a description of Parnassus Elementary School, and a picture of the last Parnassus Elementary School built in the 1940s. This school burned in 1974. Also

included is a sketch of the old North River High School that replaced Parnassus. Accessioned December 3, 2019. Donated by William Simmons of Bridgewater. 2019.0037 The Roger Harlow Collection. Harlow donated the following items to the society:

1. Booklet A Brief History of the North River Area, Augusta County 1735-1950 by Charles Blair.

2. Booklet Economic Facts of Northern Augusta County by the North River Industrial Development Association Staunton-Augusta County Chamber of Commerce and Virginia Industrial Commission. Accessioned December 3, 2019. Donated by Roger Harlow.

2019.0038 The David McGuire Trayer Collection. This collection consists of a copy of a postcard print taken in 1910 of a Staunton fifth grade class. In the picture is Raymond Andrew Trayer (August 31, 1899-Nov 16, 1974) in the second row, fourth from the right and next to the boy with the sign. The postcard was found in Raymond Trayer's (father of the donor) personal collection. Donated by David McGuire Trayer. Accessioned December 3, 2020.

2019.0039 The Greg Wood Collection. This collection consists of a framed announcement of the death of Confederate soldier William E. Woodward. William E. Woodward died July 23, 1861, in the Battle of Manassas. The collection contains a tribute to respect with three columns: one from the Rockingham Register, one an obituary, and one from the Odd Fellows' Hall Lodge No. 45. William was the son of Samuel and Mary Woodward. Samuel was a steward at Western State Mental Hospital. This framed tribute is hanging in the hall of the society. Accessioned December 10, 2020. Donated By Greg Wood.

2019.0040 The Lucille Salatin Collection. This collection consists of five items.

1. Article "Taking the High Bridge Road" dated 2015.

2. Newspaper article containing four pictures of the R.R. Smith Center when it was the Hotel Shenandoah in the 1920s, formerly the Eakleton Hotel of 1894.

3. Brochure for store Once Upon A Time located at 25 W. Beverly Street.

-4. A bulletin from the musical drama "Spirit of Augusta" held at Blue Ridge Community College November 16-18, 2007. The drama was part of the area's Jamestown 400th Anniversary Celebration. CDs of the musical are in the Society collections.

5. Letter from James M. White to Bro. James Davis dated May 16, 1863, on the eve of the Battle of Murfreesboro and Shiloh. James White was her mother's great uncle and he served in the Ohio Union forces. The letter gives an interesting perspective of camp life and the attitude of the local people of Nashville of "the hated Yankee." White, a school teacher, survived the battle. Accessioned March 23, 2020. Donated by Lucille Salatin.

2020.0001 The William Baker Collection. This collection donated by William Baker of Maryland who was moving to Australia. It was found in his rented house. David Smith Eckelberger Jr. was the last editor of the Valley Virginian (April 6, 1893-Feb 1, 1894). He traveled to Chicago for the World's Fair on October 16, 1893, and took notes for the paper on the exhibits he visited. He and a companion toured

the Liberal Arts Building, Machinery Hall, the West Virginia Building and many other state exhibits. He noted that the sofa and desk present at the surrender of General Lee belonging to the McLean family was for sale for three thousand dollars. Accessioned March 10, 2020. Donated by William Baker.

2020.0002 The Steven Landes Collection. This collection contains a copy of a map of Basic City dated November 1, 1880. It was drawn by D. G. Humphreys of Washington and Lee University. The map is housed in the map cabinet. Accessioned March 26, 2020. Donated by Steven Landes.

2020.0003 The Pete Giesen Collection. This vast collection was donated by the retiring state delegate. It consists of notebooks, pictures, plaques, awards, knick-knacks, and books. This collection is still being accessioned.

2020.0004 The Robertson/Cochran Collection. This collection was found in the attic of the Patrick Estate in Staunton where it suffered water, rodent, and insect damage. The collection contains the papers of Alexander F. Robertson, John B. Cochran, J. W. H. Pilson, and Peyton Cochran. Books, letters, correspondence, receipts, photographs, and original law depositions were deposited in an old trunk. The accessioning is ongoing at this time.

2020.0005 The Tuesday Club, Part 2. This accession, mostly notebooks, is present but not ready for storage.

2020.0006 The Elizabeth Eisamann Collection. This collection contains a letter purchased by Howard W. Harner from an auction house in California. The letter is dated January 14, 1865, and was given to Rick Chittum by Eisamann, niece of Harner. The author of the letter is Civil War soldier Charlie who is writing to his Aunt Emily. He mentions that he is "near Staunton" and goes on to describe camp life. Accessioned April 2, 2020. Donated by Elizabeth Eisamann through the courtesy of Rick Chittum.

2020.0007 The Donna Huffer Collection. This collection contains the plot map of Parnassus United Methodist Cemetery located in northern Augusta County in the village of Parnassus. The map was given to Huffer in the 1990s by the Parnassus Cemetery Board of Trustees for safekeeping. Each grave is labeled and the map can be found in the map cabinet. Accessioned May 20, 2020. Donated by Donna Huffer.

2020.0008 The Doug Cochran Collection. This collection consists of the book *Virginia Electric and Power Company. Summaries of Accomplishments. Electric System*. Year 1929. This book is a comprehensive report on all VEPCO activities for the referenced year, bound into a book for submission in a competition for the Charles A. Coffin Award. This carbonated text contains printed photos and copies of clippings and other material to present a favorable look at the utility's operations. Of note is the fact that VEPCOs roots are in Augusta County. 345 pages. Accessioned May 20, 2020. Donated by Doug Cochran.

2020.0009 Calendar of Confederate Pictures. This collection consists of a 1911

calendar with pictures of Confederate generals and war poems. It was published by Crawford & Smith Machinery. Very fragile. Stored in a newspaper box in the Wilson Room. Accessioned May 29, 2020. Donor is unknown.

2020.0010 Blueprints of the Residence of P. O. Cline. These plans were produced by C. M. Fauber of Basic City in 1915. They are located in the map room. Accessioned May 29, 2020. Donated by the Historic Staunton Foundation.

2020.0011 Lochwillow Academy Map. This map is reproduction of the Jed Hotchkiss Map of Lochwillow Academy of Churchville, Virginia. It is a topographical map. Undated. Placed in the map room. Accessioned May 29, 2020. Donor unknown.

2020.0012 Map Assortment. These maps, of mostly unknown origin, were placed in the map room.

1. Rural Survey of Lyndhurst (Ladd) with road map of houses, railroads, and churches noted. Dated October 1937 and drawn by C. F. Goeller.

2. Topographical Map of Staunton dated 1964. Photo revised 1986.

3. Staunton Maps dated 1986, printed by City Engineer's Office, and produced by Civil Maps Service, Inc. Donated by the Staunton Historic Foundation.

2020.0013 Donna Huffer Collection. This collection contains the book *Vanishing History, Ruins in Virginia* by Henry T. Browne. Photography by Kevin MacNutt. Charlottesville: Paper Show Press, LLC. 2017. Located in Library on Shelf GV-B. This book is a wonderful guide to ruins of villages, canals, mills, kilns, forges, churches, bridges, and train stations throughout Virginia including Rockbridge and Augusta counties. Accessioned April 2, 2020. Donated by Donna Huffer.

2020.0014 The Business Records of the R. R. Smith Museum Store. The Augusta County Historical Society was very involved in this store, particularly ACHS board members Judith Cariker, Linda Petzke, and Nancy Sorrells. Accessioning is ongoing.

2020.0015 Glick Family Collection, Part 2. Not processed as yet.

2020.0016 The Wayne Diehl Collection. This collection consists of the well-researched book *Brothers, John (1788-1849) and Michael Myers (1791-1852) Families of Augusta County, Virginia and Their Myers Ancestry*. It is a genealogy book detailing the life and generations of the Myers family by Wayne Diehl. Self-published in October 2017. Placed on shelf in library. FH-D. Accessioned March 23, 2020. Donated by Wayne Diehl.

2020.0017 The Sallie Trimble Collection. This collections contains two parts.

1. 1836 Ledger Book of the Trimble Mill, located near Swoope, Va. In Augusta County.

2. *Staunton-Leader* Newspaper Bicentennial Edition, Sections 1-3 dated 1940.

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Augusta County Historical Society & Augusta County Genealogical Society Family Heritage Program

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